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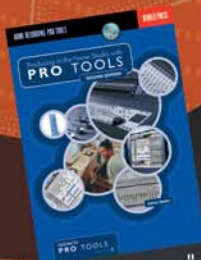
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SOUNDCHECK

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PUBLISHER:

William F. Restuccia, Jr.

bill@soundcheckmag.net

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

Teresa Francis

teri@soundcheckmag.net

MANAGING EDITORS:

Debbie Catalano

debbie@soundcheckmag.net

Jesse Mayer

jesse@soundcheckmag.net

SALES & MARKETING:

Jesse Mayer

jesse@soundcheckmag.net

Stephanie Marino

stephanie@soundcheckmag.net

SENIOR WRITERS:

Matt Robinson, L.A. Joe, Mike Baldino

CONTRIBUTING STAFF & WRITERS:

Karl Russo, Rich Papa, Alan Andrade, Jeannie Deva, "Samantha", Eric Holland, The Solid Citizen, Stephanie Marino, Mike Walsh, Deek McDeekula, Joel Simches, Metal Wench, Matt O'Dette, Jeremy Weiner, Brendan McCarthy, Marcella Iovanni, Johnny Gaffney, Mullet P.I., Kevin Wierzbicki, Smash, Al Ravage, Shawn Macomber, Dave Glosser, Iceman

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Kim Genereux

kgenereux@earthlink.net

Jeff Behar

jeff@soundcheckmag.net

ART DIRECTOR & WEBMASTER:

William F. Restuccia, Jr.

www.soundcheckmag.net

Cover Photo: Heavy Stud by Kim Genereux

INTERN:

Cayte Burdick

SEND ALL OF YOUR INFORMATION TO:

info@soundcheckmag.net

SOUNDCHECK MAGAZINE

389 Main Street, Suite 301, Malden, MA 02148

Tel: (781) 388-7749 Fax: (781) 388-1817

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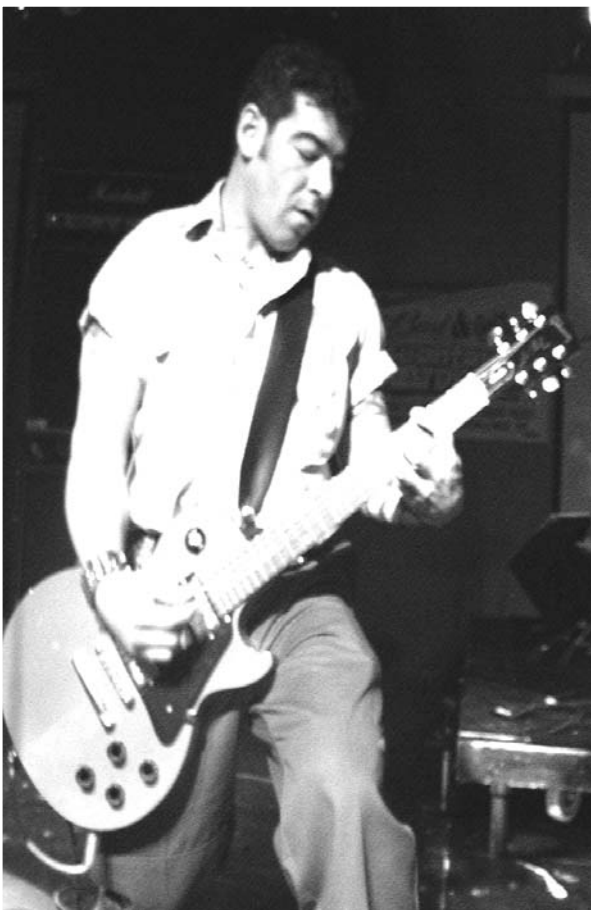


Heart and Soul ***The Ballad Of Phil Suarez***

By Jesse Von Kenmore Mayer

The last eulogy I wrote in this magazine was back in April '02 after the very sudden death of Avoid One Thing drummer Dave Karcich. It ended with the sentiment that it is important for all of us to show our gratitude for life simply by the way we choose to live. Always let the ones you love know it, 'cause there are no guarantees.....Well, it's 10.00 p.m. on Sunday, August 31, 2003 and earlier today my bandmate and dear friend Phil Suarez (better known to some of you as Phelony Phil Kenmore) received the last rites. Phil was diagnosed with "treatable" cancer in the middle of last winter. Today his doctors told us that the war was over and that Phil would finally rest within 24 to 48 hours. Phil's battle with this disease has been as heart-breaking, ugly, cathartic, and painful a journey as I have ever witnessed. This man never, ever neglected to let the ones he loved know it. He was never without gratitude. He never failed to ask me how I was doing, despite his own agony. And he never fucking complained at all....But that's just Phil. He was a lot of things to a lot of people. Many

of you know him as a beloved supporter and member of the Boston punk rock community. He was always at your shows supporting your bands. He was a blistering guitarist, singer, and performer. His presence in The Finch Family, The Syphlroids, The Kenmores, and To Hell You Ride was essential to the very essence of these bands. He is also the adored son of Manny and Joan Suarez, the cherished brother of Mariann. He was the best father he could be. He was the pit bull of a little brother I had always wanted....This amazing man has shown me more about what it is to live with courage, humility, service, unselfishness, humor, loyalty, and love than he will ever know....But that's just Phil. He didn't really think about this stuff. He just lived it...I've always hated those "He who dies with the most toys, wins" bumper stickers 'cause not only is it a stupid, self-centered sentiment, but it's a lie. The truth is that the quality of our lives is really measured in our relationships with others. Who we touched during our lives and how is ultimately our legacy. That is what really matters. Phil Suarez will live forever in our hearts because he possessed love, hope, and an inherent goodwill to others in such abundance that even the devastation of cancer could not touch it. His very last show was back in April at The Linwood. The occasion was a benefit called "Punks vs. Lymphoma." He tore the stage up that night. He had just gone through five agonizing days of chemotherapy himself. But, hey...That's just Phil.



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THE PROPAGANDA

Daddy's Junky Music's Warwick, RI location and WHJY hosted an in-store appearance by guitarist **Zakk Wylde** in August where Wylde met with fans and

announced the winner of a charity raffle to benefit the victims of The Station Nightclub fire. All 20 Daddy's retail locations had been selling raffle tickets, in which the winner would receive an autographed Epiphone Zakk Wylde "Bullseye" guitar, the entire Zakk Wylde/**Black Label Society** music catalogue and BLS shirts, to help raise funds for the victims of the Station Nightclub fire in W. Warwick, RI. Wylde, Daddy's Promotions Director **Candi Bramante** and Daddy's Vice President **Bobby Baker** presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 to "The Doc Fund," a victims' charity established in the name of **Michael "The Doctor" Gonsalves**, a WHJY DJ who perished in the fire along with 99 other music fans. **Rick Webb**, the winner of the charity raffle surprised everyone at the store during the meet and greet when he handed the autographed guitar back to Daddy's Promotions Director Candi Bramante and Zakk Wylde asking to have the rest of the bands on **Ozzfest** sign it and re-auction the instrument to even further benefit the victims of the Station Nightclub fire. Details on the auction will be announced at www.daddys.com...

It is official, the new 11-song CD by **Lucubro** titled *31.0.12* is now available for purchase from not only their website with PayPal, but also from Amazon.com and all local Newbury Comics stores. Their new website has been launched as well. www.lucubro.com...



As reported last month, **MassCANN/NORML** is holding the **14th Annual Freedom Rally** September 20 on the Boston Common in Boston. Beginning at noon, the Rally features performers, speakers, and vendors selling all kinds of merch. At press time the lineup included: **The High Time Cannabis Cup Band**, **We Sold Our Soul**, **Scissorfight**, **The Foundation**, **Herbal Nation**, **The Jazz Mandolin Project**, **Spookie Daly Pride**, **Waltham**, **The Dresden Dolls**, and **Drinkfist**. Visit www.masscann.org for more info. or call (781) 944-2266...

91.5 FM WJUL is sponsoring a benefit concert for the station scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2003. The concert will take place in the multi-purpose room in U-Mass Lowell's Fox Hall, located on the University's north campus. Bands scheduled to perform are **Helms**, **Sinaloa**, **the Kata Atlas**, **Paraffin Section**, **Amateur**, and **HTD**. The show begins at 7 p.m. and is open to all ages. The cost is free. The idea for this concert grew out of a desire to promote the station and its current woes with the *Lowell Sun*. The *Lowell Sun* recently purchased 25 hours a week of programming from the University, to be used for a morning news program focusing on the Merrimack Valley. Students, faculty, and community members' input and suggestions were neglected in the process of negotiating the sale. Come and show your support for WJUL and college radio by attending this benefit concert...

The sophomore edition of the **Unlimited Sunshine Tour**, an unusual festival tour led by rock group **Cake** that debuted last year, is set to travel the theater circuit for three weeks beginning September 2. Joining the Sacramento group this year will be power pop pioneers **Cheap Trick**, garage-rockers **The Detroit Cobras**, bluegrass instigators **The Hackensaw Boys**, and a very special appearance by 76-year-old country legend **Charlie Louvin** of **The Louvin Brothers**. On September 7 the tour comes to Boston, MA at the Orpheum. For tour dates and more info visit: www.cakemusic.com...

The Adam Ezra Group has just been chosen from over a hundred bands across the U.S. to open for **The Goo Goo Dolls** and **The Donnas** for **VH-1's Summer's End Concert** in Las Vegas. This comes just after AEG's successful College Concert Tour sponsored by **Nantucket Nectars** and their debut CD *Sessions* has won critical acclaim and the band has received many accolades from some high-profile industry professionals at **MTV**. For more details visit: www.adamezra.com...

Basement Jaxx will be releasing their third album *Kish Kash* at the end of October on **Astralwerks** (tbc). Taking in punk, funk electro, and northern soul the Jaxx have produced an astoundingly intense, ugly, and beautiful ride from start to finish. For more details go to: www.formulapr.com...

Blue Sky Goodbye is proud to announce the release of their first full-length, *Look on the Bright Side*, for **Uprising Records**. Right now, you can stream the full record at www.distantwhite.com, and download other MP3s at www.blueskygoodbye.com. Order the record today at any of your favorite online retailers

including www.interpunk.com, www.amazon.com, and www.bestbuy.com...

At **Oak Grove Recording** this month they have **Zoe Helena** finishing up her CD. **Gypsy** is in working on her second CD. **Willie James of Godsquad** is beginning his next CD. The last one they did there in Studio "B" stayed on the **Billboard** charts for 23 weeks and made it up to number ten. **Steve Nieve** from **Elvis Costello's** band was in working on tracks for his upcoming release and **Bitterhead** is finishing up some tracks. **Fragile**, a rock band from Wisconsin, just finished mixing. **L.A. Joe** is cutting basics for their second CD, and **Gray Guns** finished up an EP of originals and **Neil Young** songs. One of their lead vocalists is a friend of Neil's as well as being official photographer for the Boston Red Sox and Boston Bruins...

Heavy rock's most acclaimed band, **Sevendust**, will release their fourth album *Seasons* on October 7. The 12-track disc was produced by **Butch Walker** (Marvelous 3, Injected) and mixed by **Jay Baumgardner** (Evanescence, Papa Roach.) On September 27 Sevendust will hit the road with **Staind** on their national tour...

In July **Probable Kause** shot their "Bottom to the Top" music video at Vertigo, the streets of Boston's financial district, the neighborhoods around Roxbury Community College, and the beautiful historic "Back Bay." The video is a **GoNaïve Records** production, which is now being edited in the lab took three 16-hour days to complete. "Bottom to the Top" is produced by **G2**, and is the first single from the upcoming album *Nexus* due to be released in the fall of 2003. www.pov.com/dp/bottom_high.htm...

Portland, ME-based hard rock band **Emptyhead** took first prize at the first annual WTOS 105.1 FM Battle of the Bands at the Skowhegan State Fair on Thursday, August 14th. The contest started with over 20 original bands from all over Maine sending in their CDs to WTOS, who then narrowed it down to 12. Those 12 were played on the air for the month of July while listeners called in and voted on each band, narrowing them down to the four finalists, Emptyhead, **Sandbag**, **Boomslang**, and **Unscarred**. Emptyhead, received \$1,000 cash, \$500 worth of advertising on WTOS, heavy radio rotation for a full month, a guaranteed slot at next year's Battle of the Bands, and the opportunity to perform with several nationally known bands in the near future. For more information, visit www.emptyheadmusic.com and www.rock1051.com...

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Sub City Records, the tour raises awareness and funds for the **National Hopeline Network** 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433). Confirmed artists on this year's tour include: **Poison The Well**, **Dillinger Escape Plan**, **Further Seems Forever**, **Avenged Sevenfold**, **Shadows Fall**, **Eighteen Visions**, **Shai Hulud**, **This Day Forward**, **Since By Man**, and **Black Cross**, with more bands to be announced. The tour will be coming to the Worcester Palladium on September 18. Go to www.takeactiontour.com for more dates and details...



Ho Ho Ho Spice is a product of **Volunteer Records**, a small, but sincere, company owned and managed by **Spiro P. Ballas II**. The purpose of this project is to nationally raise awareness of hospice, and to locally benefit Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center (Millburn, NJ) and Van Dyke Hospice (Toms River, NJ). Currently, Spiro is a Volunteer Coordinator for Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center, but in the late '80s and early '90s, he published *The Splatter Effect*, a NJ, NY and PA regional, alternative music tabloid. *Ho Ho Ho Spice* is a way to bridge these two passions: music and hospice. The initial excitement about *Ho Ho Ho Spice* makes them confident that a sequel will be produced for the

2004 holiday season. So... send them your holiday tune! They want to feature a wide spectrum of sounds and artists, highlighting mostly original songs, but including a few covers, too. They'll consider: new songs to old songs. Happy songs to sad songs. Folk songs to punk songs. In fact, they'll consider any song with a Christmas theme, that is reverent to the holiday, even if making a poignant commentary. There is no fee to submit (or to participate, if chosen). Your e-mails are encouraged: volrecords@aol.com. Please support this effort, visit www.hohohospice.com for additional info...

Pop Smear, a nonprofit organization created by Boston musician and cervical cancer survivor **Christine Baze**, is proud to present **The Yellow Umbrella Tour** benefit concert at The Paradise in Boston, MA on September 18, at 8:00 p.m., to support Cervical Cancer Screening and Education. **The Samples**, **The**

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Skills of Ortega, and **Jim's Big Ego** will be performing. All proceeds from this event will be donated to The Gynecologic Cancer Foundation and The American Cancer Society. Tickets for this 18+ show are \$15, and can be purchased at the Paradise Box office, by calling (617) 423-NEXT, or by visiting www.nextticketing.com...

Following a successful debut in June, **Anngelle Wood** of **FNX Radio**, in conjunction with Round Sound Management's **Ed Durbeck**, presents the second show in **The Rising Tide Concert Series**, a showcase for female rock acts from New England, on Thursday, September 11, at the Paradise Lounge. Acts for this performance include **Fritter**, **Starr Faithfull**, **amusia**, and **Eileen Rose**. Doors are at 7:30 p.m., the show is 18+, and tickets are \$5. The Paradise Lounge is located at 967 Commonwealth Ave., Boston, 617-562-8804....



Sin Promotions and **WMFO Tufts Radio** present "**BENEFIT BASH 2**" to benefit The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and The Jimmy Fund for children's cancer on Friday, September 12th at Club Good Times in Somerville, MA. There will be 15 acts on two stages! Full electric performances by: **The Pug Uglies**, **Throne**, **Trauma Concept**, **((breathe))**,

Stratejacket, **Defrockt**, **Confront**, and **The Doppler Effect**! Special acoustic performances by: **Living Syndication**, **Ad Frank**, **The Sweatpant Boners**, **12 Cent**, **Corkskrew**, **Counterpart**, and **Sometimes She Burns**! There will be FREE PIZZA donated by Good Times and tons of raffles and giveaways from the sponsors: **LOCBAZOOKA**, **Red Rocket Records**, **SKATEFEST**, **Mass Concerts**, **Junkchief**, **SDB Graphics**, **Pino Brothers Ink**, **Heathen Entertainment**, **Mount Vernon restaurant**, **True Self Tattoo**, **Nitemare Tattoo**, and **Get Set Marketing**. **Tiffany** from **Bonne Vie Salon** in Derry, NH will be on site donating her time to give out haircuts! It's FREE if you're cutting off 10 inches plus, or only \$12 if shorter, and funds go directly to **Locks of Love** who makes wigs for children with cancer and other hair-loss related diseases! So come to Club Good Times on September 12 and help fight this killer of kids; it's a 21+ show and bands start at 7:00 p.m.; \$8 cover...

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Breathe
Inhale
Condition Blue
Searching For Silence
Another Life

OCTOBER 17th

Not Broken
Every Day Green
Fat Harry
Leaving Eden
Colony Underground
3 Minute Theory

OCTOBER 24th

Trip
Nobody's Heroes
Onebigmess
Livestock Prospectors
Zoe's Choice
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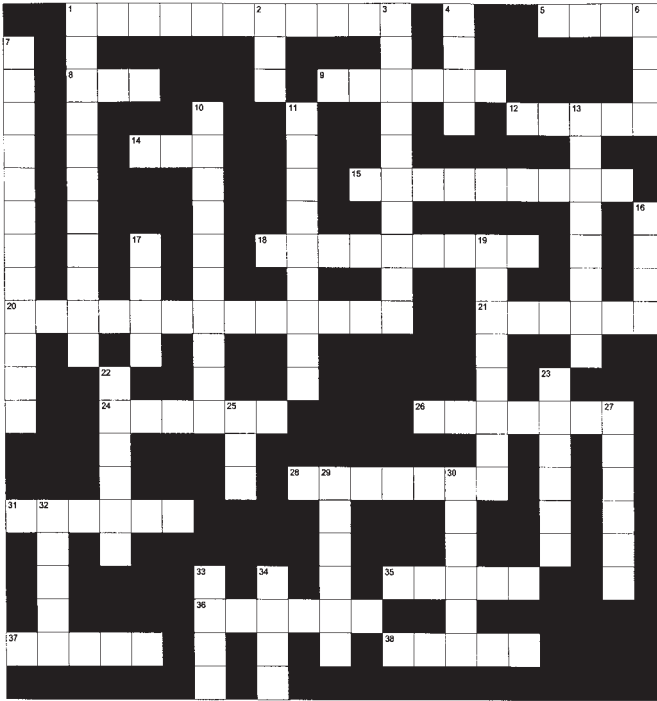
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BRINGING ON THE MUSIC



Across

1. Annual local music festival
5. Tufts University radio call letters
8. American Automobile Association (abbr)
9. Fall
12. A serious offense against the law
14. Organization that entertains the troops
15. COLLEge instructor
18. Ninth month of the year
20. Unable to fulfill one's obligations
21. A forceful collision or onset
24. Reggie and The Full
26. Fall
28. Glasseater is on this Record label
31. Sports official
35. Italian lawn bowling
36. Study at Berklee
37. Estimated worth
38. "..... Killed The Radio Star"

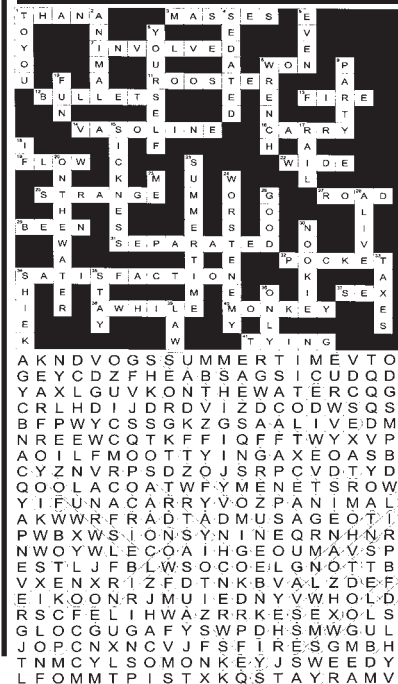
Down

1. People who go to see the foliage
2. Collection of animals on public display
3. Just released an album on Kung-Fu Records
4. United States Marine Corps. (abbr)
6. To leak out slowly
7. Put Your Money On The Monkey
10. Studio that advertises in SoundCheck
11. Engaging in a petty quarrel
13. Helmet tribute band
16. The Ozz
17. Bee-like insect
19. A sudden understanding of something
22. The sale of goods to consumers
23. Band on August cover
25. Pool stick
27. Back To
29. "..... in the membrane"
30. Played This Years Warped tour
32. The Press
33. Night-flying butterfly
34. Jai

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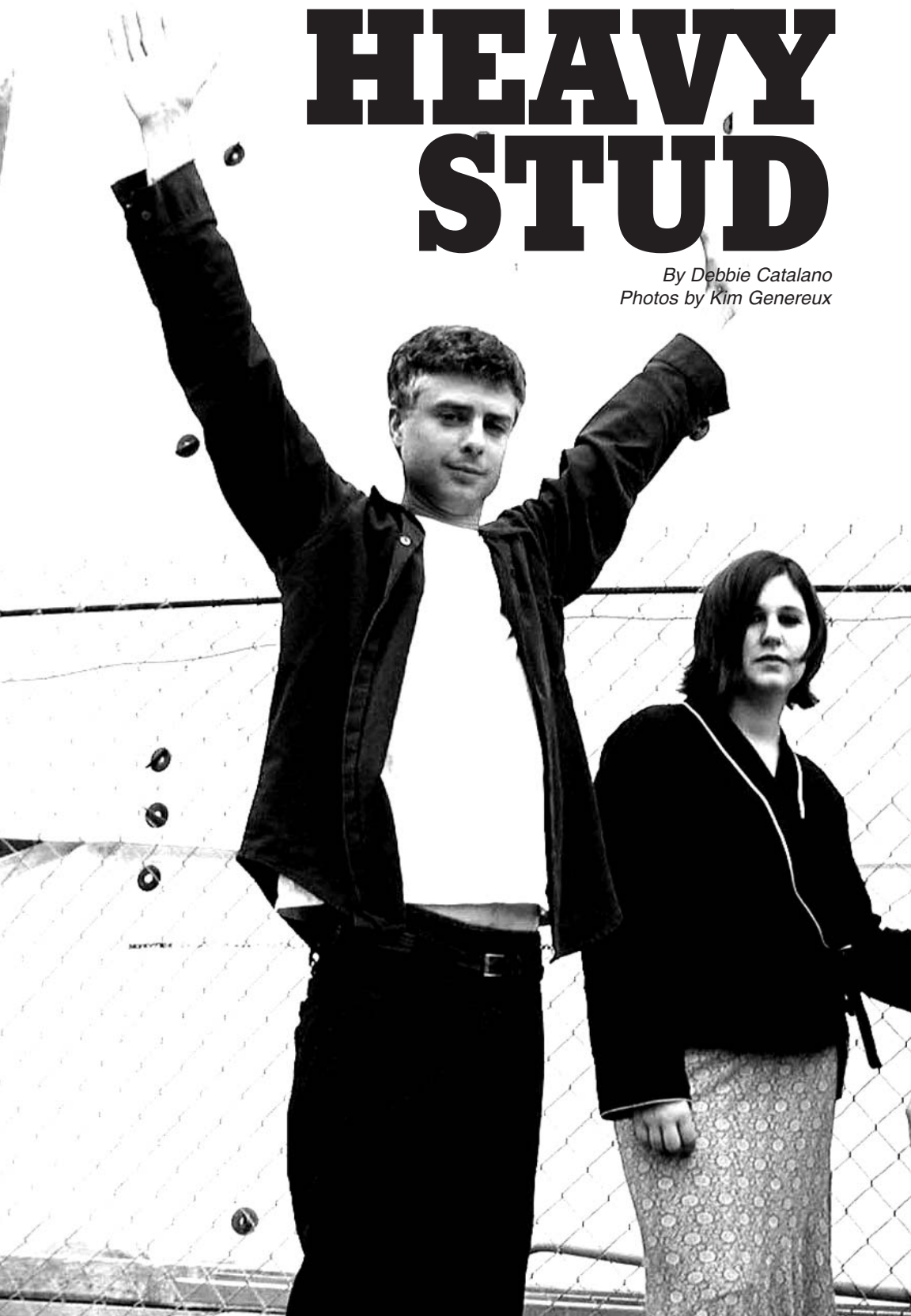
Last Month's JUMPING JUNE Answer Key



For answer keys to this month's puzzles go to: www.soundcheckmag.net/answerkey.html

HEAVY STUD

*By Debbie Catalano
Photos by Kim Genereux*



Picture this – a hot, sun-beating summer day, music blaring from a car stereo that is the perfect summer music: songs with hooks left and right, harmonious vocals, radiant pop performed with garage rock attitude. Heavy Stud is like that bright, brassy button sewn on a cool retro/vintage rock and roll jacket – they've got the shine but an edge. Fronted by the dual lead vocals and lead guitar action of founders Meredith Byam and Melissa Gibbs, teamed with the concrete rhythm section of bassist Owen Burkett and drummer Chris Foley, Heavy Stud's musical style works equally on the sweaty stage of The Abbey as it does on the WB's (now-cancelled) program "Dawson's Creek," where they got numerous play. The story's been told often; here it is in one run-on sentence: Meredith and Melissa are childhood friends, both with an intense passion for music, who left Lakeville, MA for college in Boston, MA, got a job at Fort Apache Studios, and eventually decided to translate their love for music into their own band, named after the brand name of Melissa's first guitar. On this brilliant summer day, I hung out with Meredith and Melissa in the cool confines of Christopher's in Porter Square and found that much like their music, they're bright and fun but also sharp and realistic – they know how the music biz works, and while playing out their inspired musical dream, they're businesswomen in their own right (Meredith owns her own vintage store Poor Little Rich Girl and Melissa is an accountant). Here's a portion of a cool talk on a hot afternoon.



SoundCheck Magazine: *I wanted to tell you off the bat that I love the CD ["**Straight Out Of Lakeville**"/Sodapop Records]. It's like a nice summertime CD – one to crank up in the car. So, you've been described as "melodic" and "pop" but you guys you have said it is garage but it's not garage. What do you call it? You're not punk...*

Meredith Byam: I don't think we're punk at all – well at the time when we started playing we were listening to a lot of punk rock so that was also part of it. I think we're a pop band. We try to be.

SCM: *You are. You're pop but you have bite, an edge.*

Meredith: We're definitely children of the '80s. Anything I hear, even to this day, on modern rock radio, anything that sounds remotely '80s, I really like it. I mean, we love AC/DC, we love any like really hard rock riff stuff. Like Melissa when she was learning how to play leads she was listening to a lot of Johnny Thunders, there's that undercurrent with us that we just can't help 'cause that's what we really like. We just can't shake that because even though we're trying to write something that's poppy, the catchiest, shiniest thing out there, it's still in us.

SCM: *It doesn't sound contrived. It sounds really natural. I love it.*

Meredith: That's great because usually when we do interviews they barely mention the music. You're actually the first woman that's ever interviewed us, which is funny, it's always men and they just want to know about the history. Like reviews, not interviews, but reviews they never mention the music.

SCM: *I know when a band gets a review they really want to know what the reviewer thinks – bad or good...*

Meredith: We never get that. In all the time we've been playing – maybe a handful of times, but for the most part, especially recently, we pick up reviews and it's like, they're all nasty. The last one that we got was like, "they totally don't play up their sex appeal, it's the only thing not on the fritz." Like the Rumble, we played the best gig of our lives, we kicked ass. We were so good and then to see that we didn't play up our sex appeal? We can't win. Like if we do, then that's what you write about and if we don't, then that's what you write about?

SCM: *It's insulting you as musicians and insulting you as women. It's best to just be yourselves up there and not try to satisfy anybody else. I think you're looked at even tougher, you know the whole, "chicks playing guitar" – I hate seeing that in reviews.*



Melissa Gibbs: Yeah one guy wrote the review of our Rumble show and said like, "Oh well I could play one-note guitar solos behind my back or something" – I don't play one-note guitar solos! I was so mad. I've sat home so many nights trying to learn how to play solos.

Meredith: And you're a better player and soloist than so many men. They can't see that. Sometimes it's really hard not to take personally when it happens so much and when it's 95 percent negative and 5 percent positive. When people like our band, they love our band and they'll come to every show but you always focus on the ones that are so mean-spirited.

SCM: *They probably don't realize that behind the scenes you're going to feel hurt or angry by those comments – and you have a right to. Plus, your band isn't all females – your rhythm section has always been men. For the last year you've had Owen Burkett [bass] and Chris Foley [drums] in the band.*

Meredith: They've been playing with one another forever. They were in Star Ghost Dog. We've known them a long time and worked with them at the Fort. It's actually really nice – they're best friends. It's a nice vibe between all of us.

SCM: *That's good they were already tight as a rhythm section together so you didn't have to break them in. So you haven't been on the road – do you want to?*

Meredith: No, owning a business is a little rough. If somebody was suddenly to come out of somewhere and said I'll totally give you guys some support and a little bit of money –

Melissa: Or if there was a band we really wanted to tour with, we could try to.

SCM: *Is the band fulfilling what you want right now? Do you have ideas down the line for taking it beyond where it is at this point?*

Meredith: No. I don't really think that. I think when we were younger it was like, We're going to get a major label deal – Wool!

Melissa: It's not really all it's cracked up to be; just knowing people who have had that. I mean mostly you need to have a piece of material out there that I know we can actually be proud of.

SCM: *That's so cool to hear how realistic you are.*

Meredith: We've worked in the business a long time. Plus it's like we are really close friends with American Hi-Fi and they had the best-case scenario. It turned out to not really be that great. When you see that, you're like, they were on the road for two years and home right now like, What are we going to do. They're probably going to put out another couple records and make a living off of it for a while but not like have rock star houses and cars. You got to make a living. That's what it was for me. We actually did have a couple of meetings with some majors years ago and I think it was the guy at Capitol that said, It's not 1997 anymore –

Melissa: And that was only like in '97!

Meredith: That was when Veruca Salt and at the time Liz Phair were out there and there were just female rock bands and then there was just nothing. Now when you listen to rock radio –

Melissa: There's not a girl to be seen. Maybe The Donnas but that's a special case. They don't really get that much radio play. They've been getting good tours.

Meredith: That's what's depressing about it. It was like suddenly it's like 2003 and there's no women on the radio. If in '97 like when we were really starting to be able to write songs and stuff like that, if it was the same climate, I think we would have probably gotten signed.

SCM: *But maybe that wouldn't have been good; I think the market was almost oversaturated; so you could have been lumped in with all that.*

Meredith: Really what it turned out to be is that that's what kind of inspired us to start in the first place. What was going on - Elastica, Belly, and Veruca Salt, and all of that stuff was what made us say, Oh let's play

Melissa: That's why at the beginning when we first started playing it was always Veruca Salt because those two singers, two girls, and we're like we're going to hear this forever but then suddenly they were off the map and now it never really comes up.

Meredith: The latest Chrissie Hynde record is really great and she's still making music. I'd love to keep making records but we're not anything like that. She keeps writing songs and she keeps trying to sing.

SCM: *I would think ultimately when you're a musician or a singer that you write something for your-*



self but also you want to get people to hear that and have it affect people. I mean I'm telling you that I'm listening to your CD in my car and it's making me smile, it's affecting me. I would think that's what you want - someone to react.

Meredith: That's probably the best thing that we've heard. It's awesome. [Laughter] You think we're kidding! No, I mean there have been some really some positive things that have happened during the last year or two – Mark Kates [Fenway Records] who signed Elastica..... We'd always thought that early on we've got to get our stuff to Mark Kates because we knew he was signing what we liked and what we were trying to do. Then of course it didn't happen –

Melissa: Then Weezer was in the studio [Fort Apache] and I think he was A&R at that point for them and he came in and we were like, He's in. What are we going to do?! What are we going to give him?

SCM: *Haven't you guys now at this point?*

Meredith: Well, that was what was really great is that when he finally got his thing here and started Fenway and he put out *In Our Lifetime Volume 3* we were just like, Oh we would love to get on there and at first he passed on it; then he called back and he said he really liked it and he put us on second.

Melissa: Mostly he had already had all the bands set already and he was just waiting for a song from one or two bands and he was like, Oh I already have enough stuff but then listened to it a few more times and was like, You know what, this is really good.

Meredith: He gave us total prime time, in all the interviews he talked about us. He's really cool. He's not going to sign us to his label or anything but he loves that we started the band because of Elastica. Finally the person that we respect the most is giving us some respect back. It's great.

SCM: *That must be satisfying and that's a good reflection of you guys, too. He believes in you.*

Meredith: Then we had our songs on "Dawson's Creek," which came out of nowhere. It's like the funniest thing.

Melissa: "Dawson's Creek" is our actual record label!

Meredith: Really. Because we ended up making a lot of money from that. More than I'm sure any other local band has made all year, we made five times.

Melissa: Also because we don't have a publishing deal so we own our own publishing so we have that half of it.

Meredith: If it ends up on a DVD we could totally stand to make thousands of dollars. You know people who are giving us shit about our band but really...

Melissa: We're doing alright, you know. It comes back to the touring question, too, where it's like you know I would love to go play for people outside of Boston that might be more receptive and we might be able to sell some records but it's also hard work and we have day jobs. If someone, like if the Warped Tour said we want you to go on tour, you

know what, we'd do it, but we're not just going to go out there just for the sake of touring. If we were 21, that would be different.

SCM: *So your CD obviously made quite an impression on the "Dawson's Creek" people.*

Meredith: Scott [Riebling, producer] did such a great job –

Melissa: We definitely spent a lot on the record, though. We were like you know what, this is our first record, you never know what could happen, are we ever gonna have another one? We just wanted it to be good. We waited for so long. We were finally in the studio so let's not get cheesy about it.

Meredith: This sounds like a big fat record and that's why we wanted Scott. His stuff sounds so good and poppy and fat. He's such a good guy, too.

SCM: *You also had Sean Slade mix this, who you know from Fort Apache?*

Meredith: He's another one of our favorite people. He just wanted to hang out. He's always been so supportive of the band that he wanted to do it.

Melissa: I just talked to him today, actually, about a this song we did for a children's record that's going to be coming out. We had to write a song specifically aimed for children so we wrote about our cat and Sean produced it and did the whole thing.

SCM: *Who's releasing this?*

Melissa: I'm not sure. It will either be put out by the Fort Apache management people, so it's got like Blake Hazard, Tanya Donnelly, Chris Chopin who used to be in Fuzzy, Kristen Hirsh, I mean there's like 14 or 15 artists on it; Bill Janovitz, Kay Hanley. It's gonna be good.

SCM: *It's kind of what Dan Zanes is doing. So that pretty much wraps up what you have planned for the future. You're working on that and I assume playing out to support "Straight Out Of Lakeville"?*

Melissa: Yup, playing out to try to sell a few of those but we're doing the demos...I'd like to do a few songs before the end of the year because then I'm in tax season hell so we probably won't have a whole record by the end of the year but maybe we'll have the first half of a new record and then we'll do the second half in May or something.

SCM: *Plus you now have Chris and Owen to play on the new record.*

Melissa: That's what we were saying, on this record we'll have one drummer!

SCM: *Anything you want to add?*

Meredith: Thank you for asking about the music. <

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superpowers
of the shirts
and guitars...

"Drinks for all
my friends at the
bar(mitzvah)."

- Spike



ME GIMMES ARE WARPED

Words and pics by Jesse Von Kenmore

"Dude, Do you
really think I
look like Frank
Stallone with
my sleeves
rolled like
this?"

- Fat Mike



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"Summertime and the
livin' is Damn that's
an assload of people
out there."

- Spike





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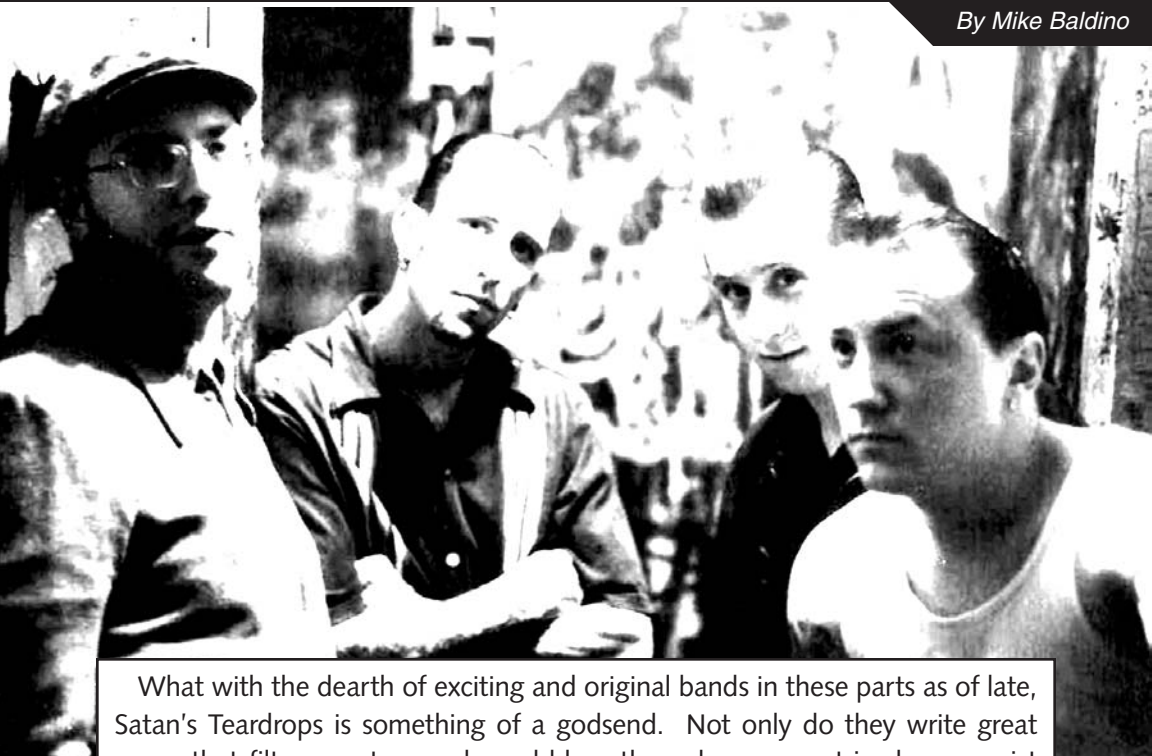
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SATAN'S TEARDROPS

By Mike Baldino



What with the dearth of exciting and original bands in these parts as of late, Satan's Teardrops is something of a godsend. Not only do they write great songs that filter country, punk, and blues through an uncontrived, non-purist rockabilly aesthetic, but they put on a jaw-droppingly energetic live show that stops just short of the band setting itself on fire. The relentlessly touring singer/guitarist/Harley mechanic Trafton Waldrop, guitarist Andy Ulery, bassist Zack Shedd, and drummer Jason Lara have been knocking dicks in the dirt all over the country with their odes to "Drinkin' Beers and Bangin' Gears" and "Strippers and Junkies." Their debut full-length, *Set 'Em Up and Knock 'Em Down* (Spindrift Records) is available now.

SoundCheck Magazine: *What drew you to rockabilly?*

Trafton Waldrop: Since I first started listening to music I've been a big fan of the 1-4-5 progression. Nothing moves me like rockabilly music. Some people would listen to Sheer Terror on the way to a fight; I'd have Johnny Burnette cranking and come out on top.

SCM: *Would you even categorize Satan's Teardrops as rockabilly, or is the sound too diverse?*

TW: It seems that everyone is categorizing us as rockabilly, from psycho zines in Europe to distributors worldwide. I think it's a major role in my songwriting, but my punk and blues roots definitely shine through. Zack, the bassist, adds a lot of psychobilly style with his writing and incredibly speedy slap bass. Jay, the drummer, has always played in Oi! and hardcore bands and definitely has heavy hands. He adds so much to our band, and I think what he does takes rockabilly to the next level. Andy doesn't strum the acoustic, he beats the ever-living shit out of it. He's always played in punk rock bands since the early '90s. Remember 13 Tons of Napalm? He plays with the rhythm of a fuckin' freight train. I think that with all of our combined styles, I'd call it rock and roll.

SCM: *What's going on with Spindrift? Word on the street is that you're looking for a new label.*

TW: Spindrift is a great label. Steve and Stephanie have treated us very well and I hope we have done all we could for them, as they have for us. We're recording in September and are hoping to release it on a different label for promotional reasons. We've contacted Gearhead, Epitaph, Hellcat, and miscellaneous others. Who knows, we might do it on our own label if no one is interested.

SCM: *There's a lot of talk on "Set 'Em Up and Knock 'Em Down" about your badass ways; what's the most trouble you've ever gotten yourself into?*

TW: Hard question. I'll tell you this: I'm not a convicted felon, and I can still carry a firearm legally. If you buy me enough drinks I'll tell you shit that will make you laugh, frown, disbelieve, and maybe puke. But I'm not about tell the whole Boston area.

SCM: *You seem like the kind of guy who's had his fair share of experiences with women. Got any advice for the rest of us on how to handle them?*

TW: I've had my fair share, but I'm still young and I ain't got 'em figured out yet. It all depends on how they were raised. Some have hearts of stone, some are diggin' gold, some worship the ground you walk on. If you can't tell the three apart you'll be livin' in misery till the day you die.

SCM: *What would make Satan cry?*

TW: Getting booted out of heaven, maybe? The name of the band isn't what it seems. My grandfather, Edward Waldrop, fought in WW2. He served when he became old enough to drink. He always looked down on me for drinking and getting into trouble with the law. That was my father's major downfall. When grandpa was growing up, entertainment consisted of work and a "swimming hole." Grandpa called booze "satan's teardrops." My old man said it was pre-war slang for alcohol.

SCM: *Who was cooler, Eddie Cochran or Gene Vincent? Better guitar player, Scotty Moore or Cliff Gallup?*

TW: The first time I heard an Eddie Cochran song was when Sid Vicious did "C'mon Everybody" on the "Rock n Roll Swindle" video. You can hear how much influence Eddie had on Steve Jones' guitar riffs. As for me, I enjoy Gene's shaky and wild, breaking voice much more than the tame Eddie Cochran. Better guitar player? I like Scotty. He's a blues guitar player. All that countrified him is a white man playing bass. Cliff Gallup is a much faster picker but lacks Scotty's feel and soul. I've learned that it doesn't matter how many riffs you can play or how fast you are - that only matters to guitar players. What matters to the general audience is feeling, pure soul, and pure borderline heart attack energy. <

Satan's Teardrops play Ralph's Diner in Worcester on Saturday, 9/20. Visit <http://www.satans-teardrops.com/> for MP3s and additional tour dates.



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MAD CAT PRODUCTIONS

By Mike Baldino

SoundCheck Magazine: *What made you want to start booking shows?*

Kristen Bennett: Well, I'm not sure if "want" is the operative here, but I'm happy I'm doing it now. I fell into booking a long time ago when I was working at The Middle East writing for The Middle East Monthly, selling ads, working coatcheck, etc. The Downstairs had been closed on Tuesday nights and they wanted to get something going, so I experimented with putting local bills together. Once, I got a bunch of sponsors and put together a battle of the bands - a then no-name band called The Push Stars won. It was a blast working there, but I couldn't pay the rent with falafel. I went back to teaching, writing, and sundry other things to pay the bills for a while. Then, Suspect Device got together. As I was close to everyone in the band, I ended up helping out by osmosis. They didn't even have a demo for a year, but we networked with the other bands and I started developing relationships with the bars and clubs. I had a day job, but had a lot more fun working with the band. Then my day job became managing a record label and working with new and different bands. I loved it. When I got laid off, bands continued to approach me for various kinds of help and I thought, "What the hell, this is really fun, I'll give it a shot on my own."

SCM: *What is Mad Cat ultimately trying to accomplish? Are you trying to change the scene overall, or just working to promote certain bands?*



Kristen Bennett has been working with bands, clubs, and record labels since 1994. Her company, Mad Cat Management & Productions, has been a whirlwind of activity in the past few years; she's booked a number of successful all-ages shows and recently started up a "Chords Discourse" series that features theme nights of local rockers covering and discussing their heroes (Johnny Cash, Tom Waits, etc.). Bands currently on the Mad Cat roster are Suspect Device, Satan's Teardrops, The Blue Bloods, Stray Bullets, and The Gobshites.

KB: Ultimately, I want to see everyone treated fairly. I've seen too many bands ripped off by clubs, managers, and labels - it's ridiculous. One thing that managers, booking agents, talent-buyers, and even myself, all need to remember is that we wouldn't have jobs if there weren't talent to support us. We need to rip up the old contracts and write new ones that assign value fairly. I'm still grappling with this, but I'm working with the bands I manage to help me redefine the value of the components of management and booking. I want them to feel protected so that they can concentrate on their music and have fun. I also want to feel good about the money I earn, knowing that I've earned it. Obviously, the bands I work with are my priority, but I'm trying to get to know more of the other bands on the scene and bring them together to promote crossover. Crossover of genres, neighborhoods, and styles not only generates successful shows, it helps the bands network and build bigger fan bases. The "Chords

& Discourse" series I'm working with Suicide Queen on is a good example. Each show brings together solo performers from what would normally be an exceptionally odd combination of bands – but it's that diversity that makes it fun.

SCM: *What changes do you think need to be made in the scene, what voids need to be filled, and what would you do to make those changes?*

KB: In general, the Boston scene is very cool. Bands are really supportive of one another and there's a lot of positive energy at the shows. But we have a glut of bands and clubs that is both a blessing and a curse. On any given day, there are a lot of shows happening in the smaller clubs around town. The problem is, you can't always get to them all, and they often split the draw. As a booking agent, if my bands or shows don't draw well, I can't get the bands the shows they need to build their following. I guess I'm looking at this from more of a business perspective, but I think that as much as everyone is working together, the scene is still rather disseminated. One part of the solution is to continue to work to bridge the neighborhood divides. Ideally, you get bands from Allston, Somerville, Dorchester, and Quincy to play together, with the hope that their fans from each of their respective hoods will come and like the other bands, then you've got a great event. A central location for shows would be great, but that doesn't seem to be an option right now. I guess my part in changing the scene is to network with the venues, press, radio, and bands to build killer bills using just local talent. I love getting local bands on national bills – that's always very cool, but it's even cooler when you have an amazing show and all of the bands are from the Boston area. I've been able to pull it off a few times, but I'd like to do it more often. It all comes back to the rest of us earning our keep off of the talent – I won't be successful if the bands aren't, so it behooves me to bust my ass on their behalf.

SCM: *What's more painful, busting your ass to book a poorly attended, money-losing show in which bands cancel on you at the last minute, or getting bitten by a pit bull?* [Kristen recently had an unfortunate run-in.]

KB: You're funny. It really does suck when you work so hard to put together a really good show, and it IS a really good show, and it's poorly attended. I took a risk with the Matinee series and it didn't pan out. I'm proud of all of the bills I put together – I think they were great – and I learned that it's just hard to get people out of bed on summer Saturday afternoons. As for the dog bite – I've still got a freaking Band-Aid on it and it's definitely been oozing more than my pride! <

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BONESCREW

Darkest Even In Light



Words and pic by Stephanie Marino

Say hello to a haunted yet searing band hailing from the bowels of Boston: Bonescrew. This dark and sometimes evil-minded music can suck you in from the first listen of their debut full-length, "Ask For Nothing." Breaking it down into layman's terms, Steve Flynn, lead vocalist/guitarist, has a versatile way of making the music so deep and dark that you can actually see the color black, Dan Kelly, bassist, creeps out with bass lines from hell, Keith Starkweather, keyboard extraordinaire, makes the ghosts come to life, and Chris Haskell, drummer, holds it all together with an almost steel-like style. Combine those talents and you have Bonescrew, dark metal that rocks your entire being inside and out. Turn off the lights, have your candles and some incense burning while reading this as we get into Bonescrew's head and also chat about MASSCANN.

SoundCheck Magazine: *Let's first talk about the CD, "Ask For Nothing." I know you took some of the songs from your previous three-song demos, but I know there is a lot of newer songs and maybe some older ones too, right?*

SF: Right, both three-song demos have been re-recorded and put on the full-length and there are a couple of older songs like "Innocence," which was written before the Bonescrew days, when I was working in the studio by myself; and there is also an old Subjugator [band before Bonescrew] song on there, *Perpetual Decline*, it was one of the last Subjugator tunes ever written. The two newer songs, "Purge" and "Open Wound," were the last songs written for the record.

SCM: *Bonescrew has been described as the darkest band in Boston, and I think a lot of that comes from Keith's keyboards, making those weird and eerie sounds. Maybe like that Deep Purple kind of thing happening, you know, when the keyboardist is rocking back and forth and everyone seems to rock with the movement, almost trance-like. Then your vocals are so heavy and boomy it brings it all to that darkness level. Would you agree with that?*

SF: I would have to say that's correct. Keith adds a lot of depth and atmosphere as well as the erie sounds and samples. If you took Keith out of the band it would probably flatten out the sound quite a bit, it would take a lot of layers out of there.

SCM: *How did you come up with doing that, because not a lot of heavy bands have keyboards in it. I mean*

they might have the samples, but they don't have the keyboards playing a major part of everything.

SF: Keith is the loose end that ties everything in. When I started the project, in a home recording studio by myself, I experimented with a lot of sounds and guitar synthesizers that sounded like keyboards and I liked it better than having a second guitar player. It lent itself to the music being darker and more along the bands that I like with keyboards in it. When I met Keith, from a flyer I put out, I knew he was the one in the first 20 seconds. And I'm glad I found him when I did, he was just going to leave Boston.

SCM: *Well that was a good find. Now I know Dan has been with you from the get-go.*

SF: Yeah, if it wasn't for Dan Kelly, there would be no Bonescrew. The band I was in about three years ago, just up, and left me. So I was recruiting new guys and got an e-mail from Dan. We met up at Johnny D's, talked, and we pretty much see eye-to-eye on everything, that connection. He's also responsible for the website and bringing Mike C. into the band as our manager. So like I said, if it wasn't for Dan, we wouldn't be sitting here talking about Bonescrew.

SCM: *So how did you meet Chris. Actually Chris, why don't you tell me how you came to Bonescrew?*

Chris Haskell: I was surfing on the web and came across their webpage and it said, Bonescrew is currently looking for a drummer and I was looking for a band, so I called them up and talked to Dan. He told me to come down and I went to their practice space and played for them. I had actually played a gig with them and my old band, Fluid Eye, it was some battle of the bands. So I already knew they were cool.

SCM: *Nice. So, have you been in this type of band before?*

CH: No, It's very different from what I've done musically. This band is more straight-ahead, driving, and more about the songs, which I wasn't dealing with before. This, for me, is great, because it's breaking me from what I was used to and giving me more direction.

SCM: *That's great. And Chris came in while you were in the midst of recording. So perfect timing for him to join in.*

SF: It was looking grim, we had been searching for a drummer for a while. Then Chris came in with a three-piece drum kit and we were like what's this kid up to. And we got ready to play, one two, three, go and he nailed it. I looked at Dan and Keith, we were like I think we have our guy, played a few more songs and we decided to call off the rest of the auditions, we had our guy.

SCM: *So now with this lineup and a full-length CD out, are you working on new stuff?*

SF: Yes, we're working on new material and the dynamics of the band are different. Before I would come up with the majority of the music and bring it in, but now actually Chris writes and plays guitar and has opened everyone up to being involved in more of the writing process. The writing has become a more collaborative effort.

SCM: *That's cool, I'm glad it's working out.*

CH: Well music is my life and I surround myself with music all the time. So I think the ideas that are coming out at practice is just from everything I do and I'm trying to rub off on the rest of band. And I see it going in a positive direction, not staying stale, and we're progressing. I'm glad they embrace my presence in the band.

SCM: *Let's talk about something Bonescrew has been involved with for the past couple of years, The Freedom Rally, put on by MASSCANN. This is always a great time, it's in the 14th year and a lot of great local bands come out to support and play for this event.*

SF: It's coming up this year on September 20th at highnoon on the Boston Commons. We are playing the after-party at The Linwood in Boston. The lineup includes, The Foundation, Drinkfist, Stratejacket, and Not Broken. And Keith Stroup, NORML, will speak as well as Ed Rosenthal, "Ask Ed" - *High Times Magazine* columnist. And you can't forget Grandma Ganja.

SCM: *For those of you wondering, MASSCANN is the Massachusetts chapter of NORML, which is an organization to decriminalize marijuana, such as the need for medical marijuana and hopefully one day make it legal in the sense of alcohol - legal with an age restriction.*

SF: I'm happy to be involved with The Freedom Rally and MASSCANN. I hope it will open people's eyes that might not realize that it's not just a bunch of potheads out there. There are sound reasons for it to be legal, and many beneficial uses of hemp, other than just to smoke it, like with glaucoma and chemo patients. So, I'm involved to hopefully raise more awareness and help the cause.

CH: I think it's great to be playing a gig out of supporting something such as MASSCANN. It's like anything else striving for a cause and I'm totally for it.

SCM: *Well I think it's great that Bonescrew's involved with The Freedom Rally and I am in total agreement with what NORML and MASSCANN are all about. And Bonescrew's manager, Mike C. of Savage Lane Records, is a board member of MASSCANN, he works very hard for this cause and has been involved in many benefits. So I will see you highnoon on the Boston Commons for the 14th Annual Freedom Rally and then right to the Linwood for the sweet after-party.*

SF: See you there Steph.

CH: I'm looking forward to it. <

Check out Bonescrew's new CD "Ask For Nothing" at Newbury Comics, see them at The Linwood for the Freedom Rally After-Party, September 20th and bonescrew.net for any other info.

OZZFEST 2003



WOW!! Ozzfest was amazing and the second stage was a true highlight! Local boys Shadows Fall and Killswitch Engage, ignited the second stage with their monstrous sets. Voivod was fantastic! Jason, Snake, Piggy, and Away are terrific performers, true to the metal scene for over 20 years and not slowing down yet. I slipped over to the FYE signing booth with Voivod to drop off some August mags and was astonished at Jason's reaction. He screamed at me, "This is the best photo of my career!" I almost fainted right where I stood while shaking his hand, but kept my composure. So I said hi to the rest of the band and they were all happy about the interview and photo, too. So while still on a high from that, I went to the press area, which was backstage this year, and Korn comes through for a meet and greet. I finally got to meet them, their PR guy let me jump in the end of the line and I got to express my devoted feelings to each member, starting with Jonathan and telling him how "Blind" was so inspiring to me, that's what made me fall for Korn in the first place, and don't you know that was the first song of their set. WOO HOO!! So since I'm already talking about main stage acts, let's go right to Marilyn Manson. His set was incredible and thank God, because I was kind of disappointed with the new CD, but live is just the way to go with Manson. He did about two new songs and the rest were his oldies but goodies. Great stage appearance and ultimate sound! No complaints at all! He even did his "Sweet Dreams" cover. I love that tune. O.K. back to Korn. STUPENDOUS!! They performed about two or three new songs for their upcoming release and did a lot of old songs that the whole crowd definitely wanted to hear. You could tell why Korn was the main act before the OZ man, they had an enormous, impeccable sound and great videos playing in the background. Korn always uses sight to go with the sound and they do it very well.

On to OZZY! He looked and sounded great for a man in his fifties that has endured so much in one lifetime, yeah I'm talking about drinking and drugs. It's ROCK n' ROLL what do you expect. Sorry to all the soccer moms that just think of him as the loving dad on the Osbournes show, that's not who Ozzy is at all. You true fans know what he is about and have followed him since his Black Sabbath days and know why Ozzy is the true Prince of Darkness. He started off his set with Black Sabbath's "War Pigs" and followed up with Mr. Crowley. He also did a new song, which he wrote during the TV show's season. Zakk is one the best guitarists, in my opinion, in the metal scene and has been with Ozzy since late 1987 and still performs like he's that young kid, with all the impressive moves that only the best guitarists can do. Of course Bordin on drums is no surprise, with his excellence. Newcomer to the Ozzy band, Jason Newsted on bass, was absolute perfection!! Jason told me, playing double-duty with Voivod and Ozzy was a big challenge for him and I say he got a big fat A+!!! So for all of you that couldn't be at Ozzfest, DAMN!!! you missed the best concert of the summer!! Check out ozzfest.com for pics, updates and other info.

- Stephanie Marino
Photos by Jeff Behar

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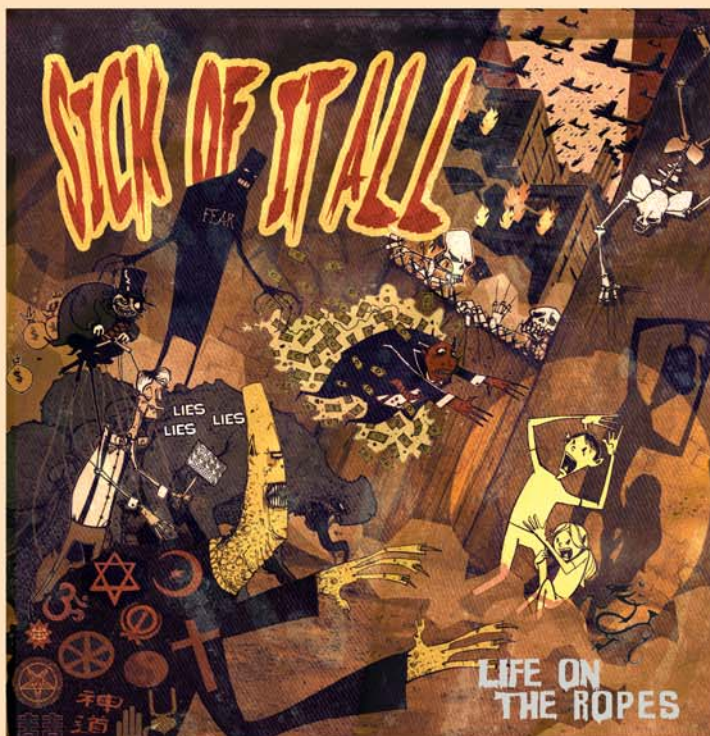
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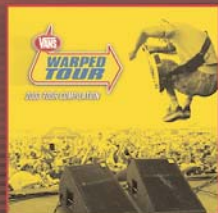
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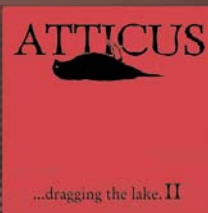
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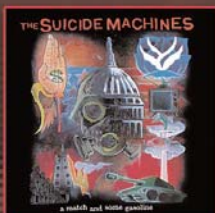
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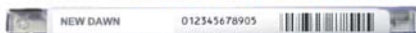
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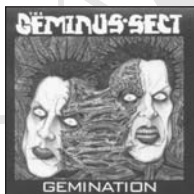
Hardcore metal legends Pro-Pain return with an unusual album of cover songs that serves as a tribute to the band's many influences over the course of its storied career in the underground music scene. The liner notes include interesting little anecdotes by bassist Gary Meskil, which illuminate the band's reasons for making each of its song selections. For the most part these songs are hard 'n' heavy metal fare, with songs by Motorhead, Sepultura, Celtic Frost, and Slayer. However there are also, some rather melodic and poppy punk selections from punk bands like Operation Ivy, and Bohse Onkelz. This is a well-balanced CD for those who enjoy some punk and old school hardcore with their metal.



- Al Ravage

THE GEMINUS-SECT ★★★
Gemination
(Sin Klub Entertainment)
geminussect.com

The Geminus Sect is a groovy industrial metal band with very listenable tunes, in fact they are at times perhaps a bit too listenable. This CD almost strays into the realm of techno dance music. There are even hints of pop punk with the tune "Faceless Rage." Perhaps it's the production, or the vocals, but there is something about the music at the outset of this CD that just isn't as evil and nasty as the freakish, splitting mechanical face that adorns the cover. Thankfully, though, by the middle of the disk things become more aggressive with the thrash-flavored "Lapse" and the crunchy "Better Off Dead." Ah, the two freakish heads can be proud. Fans of Nine Inch Nails and Filter will eat this stuff up. This CD certainly has an infectious quality, I think it is germinating in my head like a computer virus right now.



- Al Ravage

GRIMFIST ★★★★★
Ghouls Of Grandeur
(Candlelight Records)
grimfist.com

I'm not a huge fan of the cover art on this CD, the outline of a little ghoulish creature in the middle of a



sawblade doesn't do it for me. However, the music and title of the work definitely do. "Ghouls Of Grandeur," what a title...what can't I say about that? I won't say anything, I'll just silently appreciate it while the music from the disk blows my ears off. There is some fine drumming on this CD...fast stuff...wicked fast...and I mean wicked literally. These guys can blast through thrashy death metal songs, but they can also weave a scary doomy black metal song as well as Morbid Angel in their heyday. This CD even has some twists and turns, "A world of Wrath" has an Accept-style, old school proto-thrash-heavy-metal riff and even some melodic vocals to match! Drums of the damned...solos that ride the backs of tortured souls from the abyss...Mr.Scary vocals...it's all here. This is one of those few death metal CDs that successfully takes you to hell and back...well, maybe not all the way back.

- Al Ravage

BATTLELORE ★★★
Sword's Song
(Napalm Records)
napalmrecords.com

Battlelore's bio describes them as an "epic fantasy metal" band from Finland, and epic fantasy metal they most certainly are. Musically, this band is rather power metal-ish, but in an unusual way. The group vocally utilizes a combination of melodic female vocals and growly spoken male monologue to create a "beauty and the beast" type effect that gives the band's sound some character. Lyrically, each selection from "Sword's Song" delves deep into the fantasy realms of J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, which one would be familiar with from reading "The Hobbit," or watching "The Lord of The Rings" films. Although it's difficult to follow the actual story on the album without a lyric sheet, the song titles give reference to such familiar names as "Chaz-ad-dum" and "Riddermark," so at least you know you are in the same ballpark as the Hobbits. The production and music are excellent. I think fans of bands such as Nightwish and Blind Guardian will greatly enjoy this jaunt through Tolkien's backyard.



- Al Ravage

ARCH ENEMY ★★★
Anthems Of Rebellion
(Century Media)
archenemy.net

I'm sure the last Arch Enemy album got plenty of comments and questions along the lines of "Wow, you'll never believe that's really a female singer!", "Wow that's an amazing death metal voice for



a chick!", and "That can't really be a girl singing, can it?" etc., etc., ad nauseum. So, since this is a very anticipated album within the metal underground, I will spare anymore such blather about the vocals and cut right to the songs. The band, with the help of said vocals (O.K., that will be the last word on those), is beginning to develop a distinct sound, with a bludgeoning and heavy guitar attack, offset by melodic guitar melodies. There is standout guitar work all over this record, with a couple of especially blistering solos and slashing leads over the aforementioned crushing riffs. "Silent Wars" is a thrashy intro piece that gets things going in fine fashion, but the best song on the disk is "Leader Of The Rats" with its plodding heavy metal riff and melodic, video-game-theme-style guitar chorus. Although I suppose it's impossible to write a bad song called "Leader Of The Rats," that is just too cool a concept. Lyrically, the album has a loose "everybody get up and rebel against the oncoming totalitarian state" theme, and the subject matter is bleak, bleaker, and bleakest, as you might imagine. Give it a listen as you follow the rats.

- Al Ravage

THROWNDOWN ★★
Haymaker
 (Trustkill records)
trustkill.com

Normally I would have ripped this CD apart cause toughguy hardcore is



not my thing, but I must have been a little too heavy on the testosterone the day I heard it 'cause I loved it. It's tough as hell, it's pissed off, it's the perfect soundtrack for a violent act that I can not condone you doing. I do wish it was a little faster, but that's the metal guy in me. If you like the Hatebreed kind of rock you probably already listen to these guys 'cause there are not many bands that do that genre justice and these guys are one of them. Tracks that made me do spin kicks while dancing in my bedroom by myself: 2, 4.

- Mullet P.I.

Tampa's premiere metal act **Six Feet Under** are primed to take their sound to the next level with their fifth studio effort, *Bringer Of Blood*. Recorded at the renowned Morrisound Studios in Florida and produced by **Chris Barnes**, *Bringer Of Blood* also features a free DVD supplement containing interviews with the band, a documentary about the band and the metal scene ("Six Feet Underground") filmed by underground filmmaker **Deron Grams**, and an extensive photo gallery. Visit www.sfu420.com or www.metalblade.com for more info...

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LACUNA COIL

Italy's Secret Weapon

By Stephanie Marino



This year's New England Metal and

Hard Core Festival exposed me to Lacuna Coil and

I've been indulged with their hymn metal sounding musical style and flare ever since. Welcome from Italy with open arms and embrace the haunting and

sometimes opera-like vocals of Cristina Scabbia - not to mention male vocalist, Andrea Ferro, putting a heavy twist on things. Then wrap that all up with dueling guitars from Cristiano Migliore and Marco Biazzi, great bass sounds of Marco Coti Zelati, and heavy percussions and drums of Cristiano Mozzati, and you have a fantastic attack of passion with an Italian spice of great music. Lacuna Coil have been out on the road in support of their fourth full-length record, *Comalies*, which has received New England radio airplay for the first time in LC's career. So with that push, and support of their new American fans, watch Lacuna Coil go from underground and overseas to above and in your living room.

SoundCheck Magazine: *Cristina, I know Lacuna Coil started in the late '90s; has it always been the same lineup?*

Cristina Scabbia: Well we changed members once after our first EP in 1997, and it's been the same since.

SCM: *That's great! And now you're getting mainstream airplay, which is not usual for underground bands.*

CS: It's definitely weird for a metal band. I know we are not as extreme, but with distorted guitars it's always difficult to get on the radio. It's even more difficult for an Italian band, we are just so happy.

SCM: *I was going to ask you about that. You're huge over in the European scene and now this is, what, your third time here in North America?*

CS: Yes, with a lot of great bands, like Opeth and Type O Negative. We won't be back in Milan 'til the third of October.

SCM: *I know, I was checking your schedule. Is that hard since in the European culture you take the month of August off, like a vacation, right?*

CS: Well we're always out of Italy so that's kind of a vacation. We had originally planned to take the first two weeks of August off, just relax and not do anything. Then the tour with Type O came up and it was the

natural thing to do. We met Type O before and played with them in Italy and Belgium, and met Anthrax as well. There are a lot of Italians in Anthrax, so we got the good vibe.

SCM: *It's great to see that a band with your type of music, having a female front the band combined with a male singer, get the respect. I mean not only has metal came to accept Lacuna, but you have hardcore fans, too. So you're mixing the genres together.*

CS: I check the mail all the time and saw that I received one from a guy in an American punk band telling me he just discovered our music and likes it so much even if it's not his style. It's great for us, at concerts you can see the various audiences, from the typical metalheads to the normal guys who work in a bank. That's great because it means our music has no barriers, and you don't need to listen to one kind of music and nothing else. It shows that our fans are open-minded as we are.

SCM: *There are six members of Lacuna Coil with you being the only female. How hard is that, traveling and other things?*

CS: Actually I think it's harder for them. [Laughs] I'm a woman so I try to keep everything clean and get mad when I find everything in a mess. But we have been friends for so many years, that we know exactly the good and bad points about each other, so they know how I am.

SCM: *You're all around the same age, so I figured you might have a lot of the same influences.*

CS: To be honest, we have some bands that everyone likes, but we all listen to different music. Basically we listen to everything from classical to extreme; Meshuggah, Linkin Park, Disturbed, then we have the Doors, everything. It doesn't really matter the kind of style of the artist, if we like the music, then we don't really care. And that is something we try to put in our music, even if we can't talk about our influences. We try to put different vibes and feelings in our music. We don't want to enter into a cliché, we don't want to be this classic band that does one kind of music and nothing else. We want to be open and also free to do whatever we want.

SCM: *I've seen that in the live show, it's so energetic.*

CS: We really feel it, and we love to perform. We love what we do. We also have a very good label, Century Media, who is doing an excellent job in our kind of music. But it's not a label that can spend millions of dollars, that means people love our music and not because of the advertisement or for something else. That for us is a very good spiritual thing. We can be totally artistically free and have a very good relationship with Century. And they do their best to help us and we do our best to help them as well, because it's like a combination effort, teamwork.

SCM: *I wanted your opinion on what you think of the scene right now, here in America, from last year to this year?*

CS: It seems to me that metal has become more popular in the mainstream. There is not any more mental closure, people just realized that metal is just another kind of music as it is and it's not always something negative or satanic or whatever.

SCM: *When you finish touring and go back home, are you going to be writing?*

CS: Yes, we have some more gigs, but then we have to concentrate on writing new material to do another record for next year. We have to fit it in in a couple of months because then we go back on the road again. *Comalies* is going very good so we need to promote it as much as we can, and we don't want to put out a shitty record just because we want to put pressure on ourselves.

SCM: *There is also a re-release in America that was only available in Europe at one point, Half Life. So you actually have more music that wasn't heard over here yet that can support Lacuna Coil. It's kind of cool that the European bands are hitting the U.S. again really strong. I mean metal was born overseas with Black Sabbath.*

CS: Well it becomes a question of cost, it's not easy for the European bands to come over, I'm talking about the smaller bands. Of course, Black Sabbath and Iron Maiden have no problem. But the smaller bands, you need to spend a lot of money to come to America. You know you have to organize a tour, you can't just come for a show and go home. It's a very big cost, for the tour bus, the crew, etc.

SCM: *That's why it's important for the releases to be here in America to get the people to hear the music and go to the shows.*

CS: Yes, we get a lot of mail from American people, it's really weird for us. It's unbelievable that we're reaching a very far country. Several people come to a lot of gigs on the same tour just because they want to talk to us. It's great.

SCM: *Getting back to writing new material, have you started?*

CS: We already have a few songs, and a lot of ideas. We want to focus ourselves on one song from start to finish, not write a hundred and then pick only ten from that. We want to do quality songs, not too many and be concentrated. Quality not quantity. And we're not able to write on the road, so we need to be at home and relaxed. You are more creative when you're relaxed.

SCM: *I agree and look forward to hearing the new stuff when you're done. One more thing, there aren't too many women in metal that make it, so I usually only get to interview men. So this is my first time interviewing a female and I thank you for this opportunity to let the women shine.*

CS: Thanks, Stephanie and see you soon. <



KNOW YOUR INDUSTRY

By Karl Russo

Keeping The Fans Informed

Hey readers. At various points in past columns we touched on building an e-mail list. This month we're going to look at this topic more intensely. Communication is very important with your fans as they have a desire to know about the current events regarding your music. Before the digital age reigned king, band-to-fan communication was almost nonexistent and usually done via flyers, word of mouth or a hotline set up for fans to call and get information on concerts, etc. However, e-mail and other Internet tools have opened a whole new world to this aspect of promoting your music.

A musical artist should be sending e-mails whenever new shows have been booked, any sort of deal has been signed, a new CD is or has been released, or an interview is or has been done...just to name a few. When you develop a good rapport with local radio and get the O.K. from them allowing fans to request your music, you should also send a message with the desired way(s) and when to contact the station to request your songs. This is so fans don't contact the station in a way they chose not to be or contact the wrong person at the wrong time. It is also a good idea to send a reminder e-mail a few days before a big show. Be careful not to inundate your fans with e-mails. About one a week is enough unless something out of the ordinary has happened.

Just like your website, your e-mail account should be established before you even perform your first show. If you have a free web-based account such as Yahoo, you can use it but it looks far more professional to register an account through your domain provider and get one of those `yourname@yourband.com` accounts. This will cost you about \$30.00/year but it's worth it. The first people that should go on your list are friends and family. If they care, they can certainly help you out and build your numbers. When it comes time to start adding to the list and building a fan base, print out spreadsheets and put them in a three-ring binder for people to fill out. The spreadsheet should include fields for their name, e-mail address, and city, state, and zip so you can get an idea of your demographic and avoid e-mailing people to come to a show in Boston when they live in upstate Maine. At your gigs ask the club if they have a section for you to set up a merchandise booth and place your sign-up list in a visible area. It's also a good idea to have someone man the booth and encourage people to sign up when they approach and to also go around the club and ask people to sign up. Some will refuse but they ones you get could be important later on. If there is no booth, then ask for a small table to be set up in a convenient area. Be sure to alert the fans of the e-mail list while you're performing. Aside from getting people to sign up at your shows, your website should have a page where fans can sign up by entering their e-mail address...gotta cover all areas.

Your e-mail account should have a separate group folder for all the members of your list. This will save you time and minimize those who you may forget. I've heard some people suggest that you should personalize each e-mail you send but when your list starts to get up there in numbers, personalizing becomes near impossible. The subject of the e-mail should always include your band name to avoid members deleting it, thinking it's Spam. When sending e-mails about shows, always include the name of the venue, the date, time the doors open, other bands on the bill, and a link to your website so fans can obtain other info about the club such as phone number and directions. If a fan e-mails you back, even if it's just to say that they're looking forward to the show then e-mail them back and tell them you're looking forward to seeing them there. As I've stated before, follow-up is very important and doing so with your fans will give them a sense that you don't believe you're above them just because you write some good tunes. That'll do it. Until next time...

*Karl is a graduate of U Mass Lowell with a degree in Music Business
and is available for further questions at kahli676@yahoo.com*

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THE ACE OF BASS

By Alan Andrade

Pull-off with The Hammer

What's up bass world?! Hope all is well and you're doing a lot of playing this summer. This month I'm going to talk about pull-offs on the bass guitar. The "pull-off" with the "hammer" on is an old technique used by our guitarist

brothers/sisters since the invention of the instrument. The pull-off allows us

to play faster lines more fluidly and even expressively at times. A lot of physics are involved in all the instruments in our world of music. Due to the size, shape, and how the note is produced on the instrument, this dictates the character of the instrument. For instance a tuba is not going to be able to play as fast and with as much technique as a piccolo. This leads to the heavy strings and the low-frequency register a bass is in need of sometimes to play faster lines more fluidly. The pull-off is performed by having an anchor, whether it's your index finger or even middle finger then placing the next finger down on the corresponding note. This can also be performed by striking the string on the initial "anchor" note then using the sustain to play even two more notes after this, depending on the sustain and speed of the line. (See Ex.1)

The process of hammer-on and pull-off techniques used in correlation with regular attacks can really help create fluid and expressive bass lines. This technique is used a lot in slap playing where at times the bass is busy and acting as a full rhythm section. (Ex. 2) Also practice the pull-offs in rhythmic variations like triplets and sixteenth note groupings. (Ex. 3) More advanced applications of this technique is used in soloing and many other forms of creating lines for our instrument. The pull-off is definitely a technique that should be employed in our everyday playing as it is a great characteristic of electric and bass guitars making for smooth and expressive lines. Check it out!!

RIP to Noel Redding...thanks for helping out my favorite guitarist, you'll be missed.

EX 1 SLOW

REPEAT

EX 2 PUNK-SLOW

EX 3 FAST TRIPLETS

REPEAT

Send me your questions or feedback via e-mail at: tuaze@yahoo.com



SPOTLIGHT THE SINGER

By Jeannie Deva

Vocal Myths and Answers, Part Two

What sorts of thoughts do you have about singing? Do you think you have to reach up to sing high? Do you think you have to push and squeeze to sing loud? Do you think that you can only sing high if you sing loudly? Do you have any reservations about singing loudly - or singing at all?

The marvelous thing about your instrument is that it is emotion and thought-sensitive. This is why, through your voice, you can sound the emotions you're experiencing and convey them to your audience. However, if you have any confusion, uncertainty, wrong information, or apprehension about singing, this too will be conveyed through your voice.

In this second of my three-part series on Vocal Myths and Answers, we'll explore some other common confusions about the voice and singing that mess up many singers.

Registers: For many years, singers and teachers have attempted to explain and classify the vocal range. The most commonly used of these terms are the chest, middle, head, falsetto and whistle registers. A few hundred years ago when terms for singing were first being invented, some of these terms had different definitions than people's understanding of them today. When singing in a range a few notes above to an octave below the pitch of one's speaking voice, sensations can often be experienced in the breastbone. Thus developed the classification chest voice. Likewise, the head voice was so named due to the experience of sensations in the head when singing approximately one octave (8 notes) higher than the pitch of one's average speaking voice. Between chest and head was designated as the middle register. For men, the falsetto lies above the head register, while for women, it is named the whistle register (such as demonstrated by Mariah Carey and Lisa Fischer).

The name falsetto can be especially misleading since "false" is defined as unreal or imaginary. In fact, the name originates from the Italian masters of the early Bel Canto school. They considered the highest notes of a male voice unnatural and a false voice, and named it accordingly. (They were probably the same ones who proclaimed "real men" don't cry!) It's too bad this biased classification carried forward into the present.

The problem with using these categories in vocal training is that it can encourage you to think of your voice in sections. This sectionalized approach can lead to the idea that you must make something happen in order to bridge the gap between your "different voices." This road can lead to throat muscle manipulation. There has not been one single singer with whom I have worked, who found this approach beneficial. After working with thousands of singers who were confused and plagued with needless maneuvers between their registers, I decided not to perpetuate this mode of thought and instruction. Instead, I prefer thinking of the voice as having an expanse of range within which decisions can be made freely as to varying qualities and sounds appropriate to the self-expression and communication of the singer.

Register Break: As you sing from low to high, you may experience two "breaks," each marking a different tonal quality in your voice. I'm sure you would like to know why this happens and what to do about it. Register break is due to a cessation of vibration of the folds, due to a sudden release of muscular tension. A primary purpose of vocal training is to achieve the elimination of these transitional breaks and gain consistency throughout the entirety of your vocal range. When your vocal box [the larynx, within which lies your vocal folds] is able to move easily and automatically while singing across your range, these "breaks" will cease. Through your work with this book and its companion cassettes, we will address and work through this problem.

Jeannie Deva is considered by many to be one of the top vocal specialists and Master voice teacher. Founder of Jeannie Deva® Voice Studios (New England and LA) and originator of The Deva Method®, A Non-Classical Approach for Singers™. For information on her popular voice enhancement products visit www.JeannieDeva.com. For services, contact: Boston: 617-536-4553, Cape Cod: 617-413-0243, LA: 1-800-920-8220.



DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW YOU DO THIS?

By Joel Simches

Episode 36: Support the Scene

Nothing pisses me off worse than when a band blows off soundcheck, then shows up at the gig with a whole crowd of people, plays their set and then loads out taking their crowd with them. Believe it or not, but that's a regular day in most NYC nightclubs. In Boston we have the luxury of storing our gear somewhere and hanging out. This allows us to check out the other bands, establishing a healthy rapport with our peers and getting new people to sign the mailing list and buy stuff! Getting friendly with other bands is not only good public relations, but also a great way to network and expand your fanbase. If you find a band that you dig, you could share a bill at another venue, possibly a tour. Touring with another band is a great way to save money on the road because it would be possible to share gear and expenses, while doubling your resources. Never be afraid to hang out and connect with people before and after your set. You may find new contacts, new fans, or even become a new fan yourself of one of the bands on the bill. Checking out other local acts is not only a good way to get your face out there, but it's a great way to support your peers. People remember when you're supportive and when you're an asshole. Being supportive isn't only good for your band, it's good for your soul and it's the right thing to do!



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INDIE RELEASES

MATT ELLIOT ★
The Mess We Made
 (Merge Records)
mergerecords.com



This should be titled "The Mess I Made." An entire CD of purposeless, aimlessly meandering keyboard drivel? This is your one friend (everyone has one) who beautifully "plays" this melancholy crap on the piano, but yet couldn't play a real piece of music if his life depended on it. This is John Tesh on Quaaludes! Put it this way: the press kit states that "...there is at least one song for every stage of the natural grieving process..." Understand? It also says that Matt's exploring a new direction because he recently had a son. Well, he must be suffering some post-partum depression or something. He could definitely benefit from some cognitive therapy and Prozac. Hell, after listening to this a couple times, I need some Prozac! I simply cannot say enough bad things about this disc. I suppose I'll give it one star, though, because I can always reuse the undamaged jewel case...

- Smash

WHATEVER IT TAKES ★★★
Stars and Skulls /A Fistful of Revolution
 (A-F Records)
whateveritakes.com



So the first thing I notice is the disclaimer: "Even though the recording quality is not the best, we can only hope that you can hear and feel the ideas we are trying to convey through each song we sing..." So the recording quality isn't nearly as bad as I expected, and neither is the music. It's definitely PUNK. These guys seem awfully young to feel so strongly politically but I am impressed nonetheless. Songs worth the spin "A Fistful of Revolution," "Green Light, Yellow Light, Stop," "Chris Drives Me Home," "Stars and Skulls," "A Day In the Life of a Businessman," and "Post Marked Yesterday." This is one of the best albums I have heard all year...no lie. Nineteen tracks that range from hardcore true punk anthems to softer melodious tracks. My favorite line has to be "So take this job Asshole, and shove it; Cuz I'm not working for you anymore, I refuse to be your whore". Hell yes.

- *Samantha*

T.S.O.L. ★★
Divided We Stand
 (Nitro Records)
nitrorecords.com

Yep, it's a T.S.O.L. record. It kind of sounds like it could

have been any faceless contemporary punk band, but it isn't - and it's pretty good. They stick to the proven formula of their earliest recordings and play straight ahead punk with the angry lyrics. Unfortunately they rarely harness the power of those early albums. This is a good album nonetheless and won't disappoint old or new fans

- Jeremy Weiner

THE WEAKERTHANS ★★
Reconstruction Site
 (Epitaph Records)



The Weakerthans play power pop in the vein of Ken Stringfellow. You can hear a variety of influences in their music, ranging from punk to country. There is also some different instrumentation like vibes and glockenspiel. A shout-out is also necessary for the songwriting, which is catchy and creative; particularly "Plea From a Cat Named Virtue," which is about someone's depression from the point of view of their cat. A nice pop album.

- Jeremy Weiner

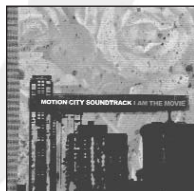
THE BUSINESS ★★★
Hardcore Hooligan
 (BYO Records)
byorecords.com



The Business are back worth a new CD. What do I even need to review it for, it's the damn Business, of course it's good and of course you should buy it. They are the godfathers of that whole street punk/oi thing (I know it was started before these guys but, these are the ones who made it huge). You can't go wrong when you don't change what you're doing, and these guys have stuck by their guns to put out another rocking album. I believe some of these songs they have been playing for a little bit so you might have heard them (I think I might have heard one of two of them live before) but who cares, it's the Business I don't think you people understand, it's the Business, go buy this or someone might get hurt. Tracks that made me give my head a shave: 1, 2, 8.

- Mullet P.I.

MOTION CITY SOUNDTRACK ★★
I Am The Movie
 (Epitaph Records)
motioncitysoundtrack.com



Imagine what The Get Up Kids would sound like if they had a fix-

ation with The Cars, and you'll get what Motion City Sound-track's steez is all about. Their emo-punk owes a huge debt to New Wave as evidenced by the prevalence of Moog synths. Too bad they didn't have the good taste to rip off better lyricists than The Barenaked Ladies: "I'm footloose in my Velcro shoes, what's up with 'Will & Grace'? I don't get drum and bass, the future freaks me out." A lot of bands are adept at writing rotten teen movie background soundtrack hooks, but this album is yet another example that precious few can pull it off without pandering and making themselves sound ridiculous in the process.

- Mike Baldino

ON THE MIGHT OF PRINCES

★★

Sirens

(Revelation Records)

revelationrecords.com



Thank God At The Drive In was a band 'cause if not, bands like O.T.M.O.P. might have to write some music on their own. Fortunately for these guys I really like A.T.D.I. so I kind of enjoyed this. This is what you would expect from a rev band, tough as hell and yet still with some feeling. Heavy and screamy and then sad and quiet, then almost hopeful then back the the screamy, then comes the really catchy part, and the fade-out with the melancholy part. I hope that gives you an idea of what these guys do; if not, pick the CD up, it's not a bad listen. If you liked At The Drive In you should definitely own this, but who am I kidding, you probably already do. Tracks that rocked my special places: 4.

- Mullet P.I.

VIRUS NINE ★★★★★

Blastin' Away

(A-F Records)

a-frecords.com



Many moons ago four men came from the West to bring us a formula. A formula that has changed the world forever, the Rancid formula. These guys have that same sound but without sounding like a total ripoff. The bass lines are more complex than they need to be and the songs are only better for it. It's catchy and makes you want to throw your beer and start running in circles like they used to do when we were kids (any of you remember those days). It's definitely punk, but it's not so abrasive that your dorky cousin whose just starting to come out of his shell couldn't get into it. This is a great release and it gets my highest recommendation for your consumer support (that means buy it). Tracks that make me wish I wasn't going bald so I could grow a mohawk: 5, 6.

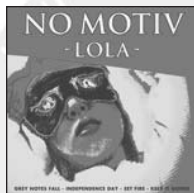
- Mullet P.I.

NO MOTIV ★

Lola

(Vagrant Records)

vagrantrecords.com



A cheesily named power pop/punk band releases a pedestrian album featuring an annoying over-emotive vocalist, pick slides, and octave guitar lines like a thousand other albums you've heard before, but they rip off The Smithereens instead of Green Day. The devil, you say! Let's not fail to mention their ballad, "Keep It Going," which sounds like Extreme's "More Than Words" meets everything off The Lemonhead's "It's A Shame About Ray" but it's about, like, friendship and warm fuzzy things. Sound enticing? Thought not.

- Mike Baldin

SQUIRTGUN ★★★★★

Fade to Bright

(Honest Don Records)

Z



This CD is so kick-ass...where the hell did these guys come from!? They have a solid pop-punk feel without the cheesiness of bands like Simple Plan along with a boatful of guest appearances from Fat Mike to Kris Roe of the Ataris. I am up to the fifth song, "Make It Wreck," which features Keki of Groovie Ghoulies (one of the best bands ever) and Justin Sane of Anti-Flag and I have loved every song so far. I'm not sure where these guys came from...but I know they are going to be HUGE. "She's Ohio" and "Me Without You" are my favorite tunes on the album if I had to pick. Wow. Catchy name, rocksome songs, cute band members...I'm sold! Come back to Boston!!!

- "Samantha"

BRANDTSON/CAMBER/SEVEN STOREY ★★★★★

6-song split EP

(Deep Elm Records)

deepelm.com

I love anything from Deep Elm Records, and this is no exception. Brandtson just rock, as do Camber and Seven Storey. "Dead Animals" is a catchy unreleased tune by Brandtson that left me wanting much more. "Dealt," "I Could Not Care Less," and "Goodbye Mr. Spaulding" are three fantastic songs with lines like, "Yeah you nailed me, in the fight for who ruled me. You came on like a friend, all that beating in your chest. Claiming you were the best, you've been put to the test, but you failed me." I had never heard of Seven Storey before but they quickly rose to the ranks of "kickass band" with their angsty emo-ish tunes "New Day" and "Covers." Another tasty treat from your friend at the Deep Elm family. Enjoy!

- "Samantha"

THE AMPLIFIER

RUBYHORSE ★★★

Rise
(Island)

After years of sleeping on floors and gigging tirelessly (and maybe more than that) all around their adopted home of Boston, Ireland's latest "overnight sensation" has finally gotten around to releasing their long-awaited, perhaps already legendary major debut. Having allegedly scrapped an entire album's worth of material and recorded with the late George Harrison, rubyhorse (sic) already had a great deal of buzz behind them. Fortunately, "Rise" lives up to the hype. Front man Dave Farrell combines elements of Bono and Matthews with an almost Plant-y presence. The rest of the band moves easily from rhythmic pulses to rocking rages, incorporating U2 flights and Beatle crawls. Combining the anthemic ("Sparkle," "Into the Lavender") with the athletic ("Evergreen") and the aggressive ("Bitter") with the affecting ("Any Day Now," "Live Through This," "The First of the Year") and adding the androgynous android arcs of "Teenage Dis-traction," rubyhorse gives listeners plenty to wrap their ears around. And while this album may not live up to their floor-shaking live shows, it easily surpasses a great deal of today's radio fodder.

- Matthew S. Robinson



KINGS OF LEON ★★★

Holy Roller Novocaine
(RCA)
kingsofleon.com

Three brothers and a first cousin comprise this band. It's hard-edged pop rock but not the heavy stuff. Nope, it's lighter and more melodic but the peaky snare sound and guitar bite give their cool songs that edge. Third song "California Waiting" has a hooky chorus that tickles me just fine. All four of 'em are skinny and handsome and have long hair. They have the right look for the way they sound; it's all in focus. Lead vocalist has that loose, devil-may-care delivery that the young girls go nutz for and the guys try to emulate. It's a good package. Title cut "Holy Roller Novocaine" has a sparse drums-and-vocal intro/verse moving into a simple chorus and high-energy bridge. The other songs are "Molly's Chambers," "Wasted Time," and "Wicker Chair." Who says it's just country and hillbilly down in Elvis land?

- L.A. Joe



AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

★★★★

The Secret of Elena's Tomb
(Interscope)

Well they win the L.A. Joe award for longest band name I've ever heard of. Great band. No kidding. Four young fellers, looking great. (Knock off the "great" krappe L.A.)

O.K., alright, but it's really a gr... no, a most excellent little modern sounding rock band. I can see why they've gotten all this good press (see... I could've said great press) and the record deal. I can tell they've got a good deal because of all the logos on the back of the CD. The lead vocalist has flair and shows his sense of style off on songs like "Counting Off The Days" with its hypnotic guitar droning and sombre feel. "Intelligence" is knocking me out as well. The other three songs are "Mach Schau," "All St. Day," and "Crowning of a Heart." We're going to hear from this band. Alright by me.

- L.A. Great



THE BECKY CHACE BAND ★★★

Entertaining Road Hazards

Becky's got a stack of press and reviews about her four-member rock pop group; looks like two girls and two guys. It's nice, simple stuff with her great lead vocals and some fine guitar hooks and bitz. The drumming is pretty solid as are the bass and guitar parts. The recording is decent - better than decent, and I'm loving the bluesy feel of some of the songs. Good looking bunch of young rockers too. Gosh, they've got the whole package and a good press kit. Third song "Better Now" is one of the more bluesy ones. Song number six "Anthem" doesn't fail its namesake. It's got classic chords, a sexy verse with some acoustic guitar behind it and a big powerful chorus with some sweet harmony vocals: "Here I go again, it's been a long, long time." Other titles: "Nothing's The Same," "Living In Sin," "Cheap Red Wine and Gin," and "Knock Me Down."

- L.A. Joe

FREQUENCY 21 ★★

Good band. Lousy recording. Got five folks playing this rock-pop music. Got lots of songs aiming for that ever-elusive radio market. I'm liking the lead vocalist with his exuberance and appealing tone. Not much to speak of musically, got some textural bits on cut number four "Silent Strength," but really, it's mostly just good solid drumming and bass playing with uneventful crunch guitar chords and lines wending their way through the R&R maze. I like that vocalist. I hate that kick



SOUNDCHECKMAG.NET

drum sound. But I'll list a few songs for you anyways: "Tuesday In The Fall," lovely title that, "Jealousy Gone," "Party All Night," "Don't Pull Me Down" with its zippy guitar harmonies and twiddlings, and lastly "Better View," which is a bit of a throwback to the glory days of rock: the 1980s.

- L.A. Joe

NATALIE FLANAGAN ★★★★★
Let
onewayproductions.com



Natalie plays acoustic guitar and sings and wrote eight of the nine songs on this CD. She lists Lou Reed, Bob Dylan, and Joan Armatrading as some of her influences. Her seven-piece band has a great, loose, bluesy feel to it on songs like "Patience" with its medium tempo, honky-tonk piano bits and guitars dancing around her superb vocal delivery. The next song gets smooth on us with its processed electric guitars and sombre organ pad. It's called "Come In Tokyo" and again, a distinctive vocal performance and sweet lyrics. Some of the songs sound like mainstream radio pop. I'm putting "Margot's Arms" in that category; its ready to go and loaded up with stuff that grabs you by the collar and shouts "Pay Attention, We've got a solid new artist her." Nice job y'all.

- L.A. Joe

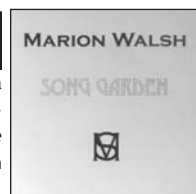
THE CHANDLER TRAVIS PHILHARMONIC ★★★
Llama Rhymes
sonictrout.com



What a mess. They refer to the music as being "... the missing link between Sun Ra and The Kinks." Do you know who Sun Ra is? Ever heard his music? I have. So we've got a bunch of songs - simple songs - occasionally loaded up with vacky horn parts. Lots of 'em; he's got about 25 people listed as having played instruments or sung. We've got some bizarre goings-on here to be sure. Roughly, a vocal, a rhythm section, and 10 horns doodling about is not without the norm. Experimental. Wackola songs include: "Village of the Damed," "Llama Rhymes With Mama," "Don't Come Near Me," "Milk Truck on Fire," and "Llama Doesn't Quite Rhyme with Perpendicular." Funny thing is, some of the songs are pretty good. What the hell... everybody gotta be someplace and they're somewhere between Sun Ra and The Kinks.

- L.A. (?)!

MARION WALSH ★★★
Song Garden



Marion opens the CD with an a cappella version of Simon and Garfunkle's "Bookends." It's got three or four parts of harmony and - gosh

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- it's out of tune here and there. She plays acoustic guitar on a bunch of these songs and she wrote most of them and sings them. Let's say she's got a pretty sounding voice, and a slight looseness of pitch occasionally. That can be good you know. "On My Lips," an original. sounds just fine with her simple melody and lyrics. "Look What You've Done" sports some Dylan-esque harmonica bits and some lovely harmony vocals. I would have recorded the acoustic guitar differently. It's mighty thin and it's the only instrument on some of the songs. Poor Marion. am I tearing her up? I don't mean to give that impression. She sounds just fine for the kind of folksy stuff she writes and plays and sings. I would have grabbed a few more takes.

- L.A. Joe

STEVE MARDON ★★★
Coffee and Beer

"I start my day with coffee and I end it with a beer - and in between I wonder what the hell I'm doing here..." Indeed. Yup, couple two-tree lyrics for you from title cut, song number one, "Coffee and Beer." Got a country, bluegrass feel to it, though they mention on the enclosed info sheet that a few of the band members are from a surf/twang band. Yup. Lotsa twang. "New Girl at the Office." Guess what that one's about. But Steve's got an appealing voice and he sings his light, amusing toonz with abandon. Third song "When I'm Drunk" has "I Only Think About You When I'm Drunk" for a refrain. Well, I wonder if he thinks about her often... Other titles: "Short-term Romance," "CD Song," and "Distracted." Bit of drums, lotsa acoustic, lotsa twang, and a couple harmonies. It's enough to get their point across.

- L.A. Joe

JOSH LEDERMAN Y - LOS DIABLOS ★★★
It's a Long And Lonely Time...
coffeestainmusic.com

On the enclosed info sheet they refer to Josh as the "Local King Of Irish-Jewish Folk Punk..." They also mention "Irish Wedding Music" but that may be tongue-in-cheek. More on the target is their description of the music as "Combining blues, folk, bluegrass, Celtic music and rock..." Josh has a loose 'n' happy vocal delivery and five other musicians in his band. There's lots of mandolin and accordion along with drums, bass, banjo, guitar, and cello, and a few other folks singing here and there. So I agree: folksy songs with a Celtic flavor. In their idiom, they probably do well, as the stuff is well-played and written and it sure sounds authentic to me. Some happy, folky song titles for you: "The Moosejaw Express," "A Dram for the Boys," "Winter Hill," "Darling, I Quit Drinking," and "I Fell Inside A Ditch." Fell inside a ditch, eh? Put back a few drams did you?



- L.A. Pint

THE JAYWALKERS ★
Bill@jwalkers007@aol.com

Boys, boys, boys...Let me start out by recommending a more professional portfolio. I wasn't very impressed, and we all know, first impressions could cost you a lot.

The CD sounds like a very roughly cut production, like something you would hear on an unreleased album, years into the future. The music is cogent and kind of sweepingly mellow. A Rusty Root drinking a Dave Matthews kind of sound, but it's all lost behind the venomous vocal styling of Jeff Hillard, a bargain basement Dicky Barrett sounding lad, who croons sweetly one moment, then filters severity the next. Funk and ska are two types of music that you're either really good at playing, or not. You can't perform them half-assed, or the recording ends up sounding incredibly immature, as this one did. On the other hand, they sound like they'd be fun to hear live...O.K. fun to hear live if I was really hammered, and the music was hidden behind a veil of ringing ears and gurgling vomit. I can't stand that Dave Matthews shit.

- Marcella Iovanni

DAVE OSOFF ★★★
Mosaic
daveosoff.com

Top of the enclosed info sheet sort of says it all "Dave Osoff - keyboardist/songwriter." The songs run from good-time boogie-woogie such as "Never Enough" to soft jazz such as "Daybreak." Then we've got an organ version of George Harrison's "Savoy Truffle," nice idea that. May I quote from the enclosed info sheet: "Deep soulful grooves, intriguing melodies and arrangements, intense and unique keyboard artistry." (Hey - no verb in that sentence) but we've got lots of 'verb on that lilting flute on composition number nine name of "Hannah." They mention "World beat, Latin, pop/rock, R&B, high-energy funk, gospel" the list goes on. Yup - got lots of styles represented. Songs: "On Our Way," "Undercover," "QX5," "Why Not?," and "Even Now (I Still Think of You)." Nice playing dude and pass that on to the other five players.

- L.A. Joe



SHAWN MCLAUGHLIN ★★★
Smorgasbord

Shawn's a drummer and he's really good. He decided to write songs and he's got quite the convoluted collection here. Got about 19 other folks playing on these jazz/rock/fusion like-type songs. We've got loads of guitars and basses and some cello, sax, piano, turntable... you get the picture. His grooves are solid, placement within the measure is exemplary, and knowledge of a couple odd-times is delightful; I'm hearing Lenny White? Cobham? Even moments of Bruford with a couple change-ups worthy of Tony Williams. As a showcase for his abilities, this is about as good as it could get. It's a fun listen. I'm not hearing any new "Standards" in the songwriting and the level of performance varies a bit from song to song - not his performances - those accompanying him, but it gets the job done. Nice work brother. Look me up - might have a gig or two for you.

- L.A. Joe



LYN PAUL JUNCTION ★★
 Dirty Rain
lynpauljunction.com

Four-member band, three of 'em sing this bluesy, funky rock stuff and the instruments are guitar, bass, drums, and a couple play some keyboards as well. The songs are pretty good. The drum sound isn't. "Three" has a few gorgeous melodic moments. It's a slower one with lots of acoustic guitars but the vocal words/melody are lovely. Most of the songs are crunch guitars, however and we've got some nice vocal harmonies, here and about. Now that I'm over the second rate audio bump, let's get to the list of toonz: "Inside The Real" is another slower song, but has thoughtful parts and lyrics. They're Lennon and McCartney's "Hey Bulldog." Other titles: "Spiders," "Would You Ever," and "High Noon." Now turn down that damned room mic. What the hell's the matter with you?

- L.A. Joe

DIANE ZEIGLER ★★★
 Paint Brush
dianezeigler.com

"I see you off in the distance - on the face of the rising full moon - and I see you on the broadside of the mountain with the Indian paintbrush in bloom." Nice lyrics, eh?



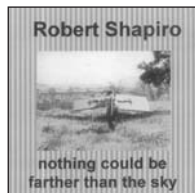
They call her "Zig" and she wrote all the songs except "Indian Paintbrush," which those lyrics came from. But what the heck - she picked it to sing, right? Trust me, her lyrics are just as good. "When I have passed through the forest of my trials - and I stand at last where the shadows run for miles - we'll ride with painted shields on ponies fast through fields of shining gold..." Those are some of hers from a song name of "Gentle Soldier of My Soul." I think they're great. It's gentle stuff with lots of acoustic guitar and other acoustic instruments. Lots of influences as well; not just folk. For instance, that first song I quoted has some Celtic bits but "With My Eyes Closed" sports a bit of bluegrass. I like her voice and her songs.

- L.A. Joe

ROBERT SHAPIRO ★★★
 Nothing Could Be Farther
 Than The Sky

Robert wrote all these songs save one and he sings them and plays acoustic guitar on them. He also plays mandolin, banjo, bass, and drums, though he's got three

friends that helped him with keyboards, bass, and guitar on a couple songs. I'm liking the textures he comes up with. For example the simple banjo pluck, back in the mix on "Evolution." Geez, I wish these acoustic guitar-powered songs were better recorded, but what the hell, you can't have everything. So I'm listening for that smash, breakthrough hit to send Robert soaring to stardom. Haven't heard that hit but I'm lik-



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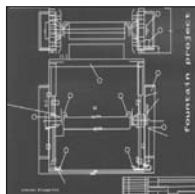
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ing a number of the songs: "Butterflies," "Canned Laughter," "Gyroscope" with its groove and steady guitar riff, and lastly "Town House Motor Inn" with its zippy percussion and smooth vocal take. He's out gigging so if you're into folk like-type music it's a good listen.

- L.A. Joe

FOUNTAIN PROJECT ★★
Stereo Blueprint
fountainproject.com



Fountain Project is one of those jam rock slash jazz style bands. Truthfully it wasn't what I was expecting but it was a good change for me. "Stereo Blueprint" is one of those albums you can just pop in the CD player and just relax and just let everything go. It has that relaxing melody to it but also has some good guitar riffs; and lead vocalist Todd Baker, who has a decent voice. To top it off it just all flows well. much love and I'm out.

- Iceman

GO FOR BROKE ★★
Style Syncretic
(Ill-Logic Records)
goforbroska.com



So the first time I heard the CD I wasn't feeling it....the lyrics seemed rushed and the vocals seemed off. I stuck it at the end of my "to-be-reviewed" pile and picked it back up this morning. I still think the lyrics are a little rushed...but it sounds pretty good. The recording quality is high (which is always a big thing for me). I dig the horns and the drummer is just insane. "Lost in Boston" is a cute tune, as are "Play the Pawn" and "Go Home." The guys are like the junior Bosstones. With a little more polishing I bet they will definitely go places (without getting lost!).

- *Samantha*

GRUVIS MALT ★★
...With the Spirit of a Traffic Jam
(Lakeshore Records)
gruvmalt.com

These guys are one of my favorite bands in the whole world. If you have never heard them before, a.) you live under a rock and b.) you need to be slapped. GM is an amazing blend of ska, soul, funk, and hip-hop with crazy, inspiring lyrics and songs that just flow. "...With the spirit..." is no exception! "Low Concept/High Maintenance," "Even the Scars Forget the Wounds," and "Aggression....The Silence" are my favorite tunes but the entire album is like an orgy of flavors and colors and feelings that resembles an out-of-body experience. "Give your child a gun to kill a natural reaction/Wrap him up in film and he will be your movie star/It's a sad world...but even the scars forget the wound." And "I'm doing a residency in music in a strictly

commercial zone and I can't even believe that I'm at odds with the city, do I have to get endighted to get support around here? I mean I'm not Dunkin' Donuts but I'm giving back to society and you don't recognize without the label validation spectacles(e)" are two lyrical bits that kick major ass. The Malt is amazing...I love them...you should too!

- *Samantha*

HAZIE MAZE ★★
Bring Us Together
(Naked Ear Records)



Hazie Maze is on of those bands that you have heard about...or seen the flyers for...but never actually HEARD or SEEN live right? Well it's time to change all that! The Maze is an blend of funk, soul, hip-hop, disco, jazz etc., etc., etc. These guys are the godfathers (and mother) of electro-jam fusion! "Bring Us Together" is filled with more soulful/funky/super hip tunes like "Peaches in My Pocket," "Tangled Web," and "Yeah-Yo." Pop the CD and sit back (with a nice frothy beverage) as Ameer Jana and gang rock it. This is one of those CDs where you get so caught up in the groove you do not even noticed that hour and half that has flown by...or the repeat cycle your stereo is tuned to! Trust me on this one....no matter what your musical preference- Hazie Maze will hit the spot!

- *Samantha*

THE LAST HOMBRES ★★
Redemption
(Koch)
thehombres.com

You know your band is pretty good when people are calling you wanting to join. Imagine how Last Hombres leader and guitarist Paul Schmitz felt when Levon Helm was the one doing the calling. Helm, the former drummer for the Band, adds instant credence to the Last Hombres if you realize he is in the band. But you won't hear his legendary voice on "Redemption"; the man who sang the chestnut "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" lost his singing voice in a battle with cancer. Fortunately the Last Hombres are very well set in the vocalist department, with Schmitz alternating leads with bassist Michael Meehan and lead guitarist Russ Seeger. The boys waste no time staking out their turf, leading off with "The King Of Memphis," a driving country-rocker with an eerie edge created in part by the weeping pedal steel playing of Buddy Cage (New Riders Of The Purple Sage). "It's Alright Norma" and "Saint Estephe" both give nods to the Grateful Dead, with Seeger's vocal on "Norma" recalling Bob Weir while "Saint Estephe" reminds of Workingman's Dead. Seeger waxes Dylanesque on "Humble Enough," confronting a rival with the lyric "Dog teeth always growlin'/jawbone always tight..." In a way it is a blessing that Helm isn't singing on "Redemption," otherwise the sizable talents of Seeger and company could be pushed to the back.

- Kevin Wierzbicki

RAM ★
LBCD47
lowbudgetrecords.com



O.K. so yeah, this album was just a mistake from the minute it touched my hand. For starters I thought that I grabbed a heavy metal record and let me tell you it had to be the furthest extreme to metal, I think the only people that could categorize this as heavy is the Amish or the Puritans. Then I started to listen to it, it goes from melodies from "Blues Clues" to a theme song for "The Mario Brothers." I mean, shit, I thought that I was watching friggin' Nickelodeon or "Sesame Street." All I needed was the words with the ball bouncing to the music so I could sing along. I always have an open mind to different styles of music but damn this was bad. But hey all you parents out there can play this for your little kids. Much love and I'm out.

- Iceman

CHET BAKER ★★★
Chet is Back!
(Bluebird/RCA)

Oh if only it were true that the legendary trumpeter/vocalist/tragic hero Chesney Baker were in fact back and with us again. Alas, all we have are memories and the music. But what music! Recorded shortly after Baker was released from an Italian prison where he had been held for drug-related charges

(hence the title), this expanded collection not only features some of Baker's freshest playing, it also offers a number of additional tracks, including some original pieces sung in Italian. Opening with the finger-snapping brightness of Thelonious Monk's "Well You Needn't," Baker's triumphant return to the studio swings from a clean and sharp "These Foolish Things" and a gently soaring "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" to Sonny Rollins' bold and bustling "Pent-Up House" and the pianistic "Blues in the Closet." The moods are varied, but Baker's breathy, emotive and at times provocative playing is consistent throughout.

- Matthew S. Robinson

BEEHIVE & THEE BARRACUDAS ★★★

In Dark Love
(Swami Records)
swamirecords.com

Gang of Four, Funkadelic, Mission of Burma, Devo, and bits of off-kilter, angular, staccato bands past and present inform Beehive's aesthetic, and it's disarmingly successful. Beehive's music lacks the winking irony and insincerity of the hep cats in Williamsburg who are mining a similar vein, and they're catchier, more adventurous, more danceable and more fun because of it. This music is so unlike anything else that it's hard to compare or nail down in these confined lines, but imagine taking the best tracks off the latest albums by Sonic Youth, Stereolab, and Liars and imagine it being way more interesting. Then go pick up "In Dark Love."

- Mike Baldino

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DERELICT BREW ★★★

Amputated Feelings

derelictbrew.com



Amputated Feelings may be one of the best ambience albums of all time, simply because the guys of Derelict Brew are so willing to take chances. They claim The Beatles and Sonic Youth are two of their largest influences, but I also see a lot of trippy classic rock (The Doors) and Radiohead circa "OK, Computer" in this album. "Amputated Feelings" is truly a strange sonic experience, and although its roots are in relatively mainstream rock, the whole is definitely greater than the sum of its parts. Notable tracks are "Toxic Candies," which features a great groove reminiscent of The White Stripes, "Beelzebub Blues," and "Lonesome Heatwave" (very very very Sonic Youth). But just mentioning whom these guys sound like does not do justice to the product that has been assembled. Honestly, you just have to buy this CD if just to say (for the first time in a long while) you heard something truly original.

- Dave Glasser

TIMBER JERRY ★★

Audio Cinema

timberjerry.com



Timber Jerry is a band that obviously has a lot of influences. They play like Vertical Horizon and sing like Dashboard Confessional....kind of. The guitar and drums layers are just too repetitive on these tracks, and the vocals are way too trying (and also repetitive). I won't bother to point out specific tracks, considering you can (with the exception of "I'm Down") let the CD play through and not realize that the songs are changing. As I said, "I'm Down" is the only exception, where Timber Jerry sounds more like a whiny SoCal Skater punk band than anything else. Don't get me wrong, this is not by a long shot the worst band I've heard, but until they change up the rhythm and cadence of their songs, it's just one big wannabe radio-friendly track to me.

- Dave Glasser

SPOUSE ★★★

Love Can't Save This Love

(Pigeon Records)



Spouse brings good indie rock to the table on "Love Can't Save This Love." The group's sound is reminiscent to Pavement not only in style, but in the fact that both bands play melodic indie rock well. Spouse's textured sound features synth, keyboards, and on certain tracks, banjo. Highlights include the upbeat "Chifon," and the banjo driven "Catch 22," the textured sound and vocals of which sound remarkably similar to those of Wilco. The careening guitars, calm vocals, steady rhythm section, persistent banjo, and background synth of title track "Love Can't Save This Love" end the album on a good note.

- Johnny Gaffney

THE LOCAL MOTIVE ★★★

Here's One For You...

On "Here's One For You," The Local Motive play bluesy tunes with an attitude. The trio gels well together, especially on "Never Ending Ride," the most energetic song on the EP, but this album certainly does not wane. After "Never Ending Ride" more laid-back blues rock follows, and the album ends with a jammy Zeppelin vibe on "I Never Tried To Make You Happy." Fans of blues rock, this disc will not dissappoint.

- Johnny Gaffney

DAREDIABLO ★★

Feeding Frenzy

(Southern Records)

darediablo.com



Guitar, keyboard, and drum instrumentals. Ummmm. This started off with a meaty guitar riff and I was pumped until the Deep Purple-sounding organ kicked in...and then after the first time or so that the vocals should've come in (and didn't!), my heart truly sank. I grabbed the case, saw no vocal credits, and began to fall into a deep depression. I stopped myself, though, by telling myself that I'm a reviewer and have to remain impartial. O.K....open-minded, open-minded...! DO like instrumentals when they have a purpose and are well written...hmmm. Is there a purpose? Sometimes. Well-written? Sometimes. Do I like this? Sometimes. Not a whole-hearted endorsement, but that's as good as this one gets. This first track ("The Hornet") sucks and the second track ("Behold The Panther Stone") rocks. Why would you do that? Track 3 (title track) is O.K., but by track 4 I'm almost getting a Berklee ensemble-class vibe. It's like this is the final project for "Instrumental Power Trio 401." I dunno. The made-for-TV titles don't help: "Celebrity Shark Week," "Crockett & Tubbs," "Feeding Frenzy," etc. My advice? Turn off the TV, go outside, meet some girls, welcome to the new millennium! Either that or see if some Spinal Tap-ish Brit dude needs a backing band for his new solo tour. Nice carpsicle on the cover, though.

- Jonny Smash

UNEARTH ★★

Endless

"...a challenging hardcore / metal hybrid combining blinding riffs, crushing hardcore and uplifting lyrics." That came straight off the enclosed info sheet. Got five younger looking fellows in the photo and one of them sings (!) with that scream-roar-wolf thang. Maybe two guitars? And of course, bass, and drums. Song number four "My Dreams" caught my ear immediately with its two-part guitar intro; rather medieval sounding. Then we crash into a descending lick and here comes Wolfie. It's got a dissonant section and ...uh... a couple other bitz. Everyone plays well though the recording/mix is harsh, not by choice I'm guessing. The other three titles are "Endless," "Internal War," and "The Charm." Lots of rapid-fire double-bass drum bits and buzz-saw guitars but Wolfie rules throughout. All hail Wolfie.

- L.A. Howl

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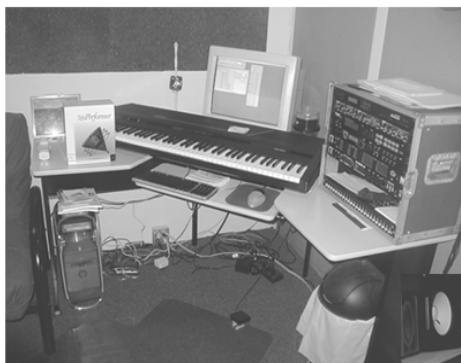


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(603) 305-8320~

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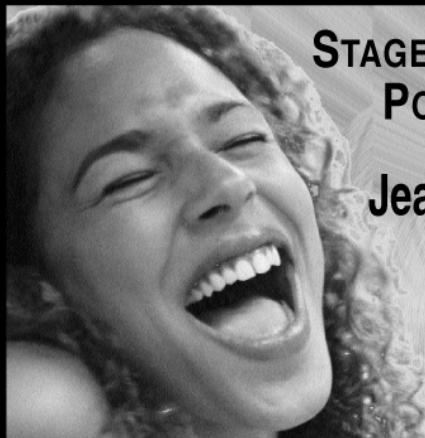
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Drummer needed for moody lush rock band. Influences include Dredg, A Perfect Circle, Jeff Buckley, The Mars Volta, Coldplay, Ours, many more...have gigs, CD, rehearsal space, recording studio. Drummer must be skilled, dedicated. Please send samples, experience, background to beasley@catylist-i.com

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Metal band from Foxboro, MA seeks vocalist. Details available at <http://trinitytest.com/singerneeded.php>. If interested email bob@trinitytest.com

Vocalist - backup female singer with leads needed for cover band top 40, practice in Peabody contact Ken at wild-fire6654@aol.com or call (617) 962-3246~

By established Band from South of Boston area. We have gigs , a demo in the works and a core following. Looking for a singer, no screamers or rappers please, no "Jamies" Our Influences are Megadeth, Testament, Dream Theater, Queensryche...etc... Ideal candidate is experienced, responsible, mature, has transportation and good melodic sense, can contribute financially, and has a demo. contact us at Megadeth2112@hotmail.com for more information.~

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GB band (The Dreamers) are looking for a male singer (2/3-1/2 of the songs) who will also do backup vocals too for female singer too. Must be drug free professional, plays well with others and respectful at all times. Must make rehearsals 2-3 times a week in Marblehead. Greg (978) 922-7418 leave message~

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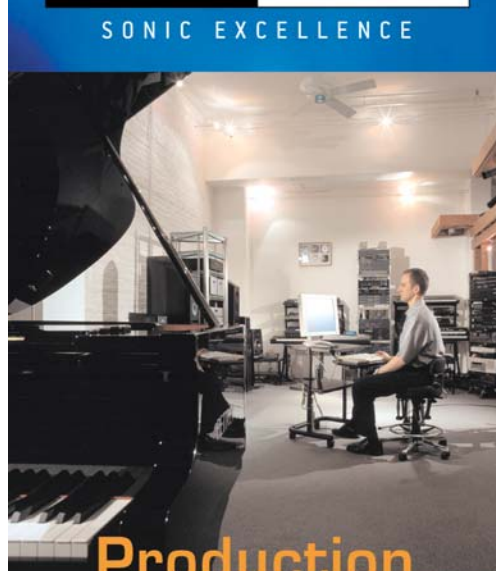
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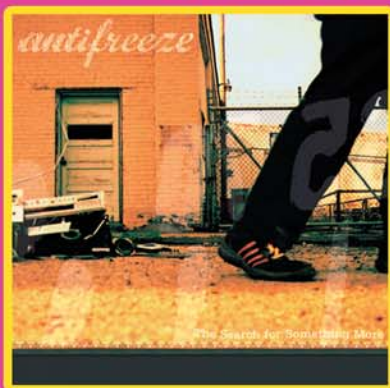
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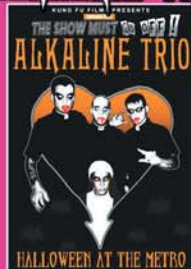
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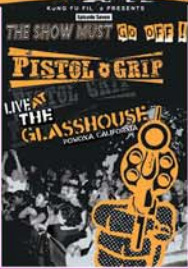


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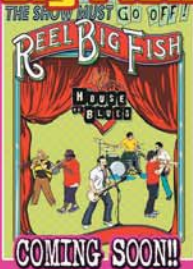


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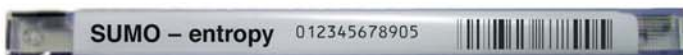


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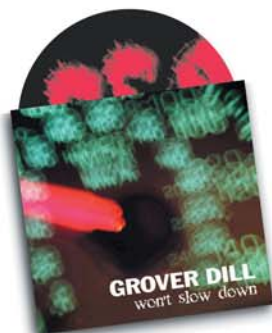
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